

A Place for Elderly Congregate Living:
A Design Study Exploring the Physical,
Visual, and Functional Qualities of
Shared Residential Space

by
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B. Design, University of Florida
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To Jean,
for sharing the journey...

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ABSTRACT

The concept of congregate housing is based upon an idea that frail elderly individuals living in a communal setting are offered significant social and psychological benefits which could not be acquired in an institutionalized setting. The congregate domestic environment brings together people of divergent backgrounds and attempts to foster a sense of community through the social interaction that comes from sharing intimate daily experiences in a home-like setting without sacrificing individuality and freedom of choice.

The congregate housing concept integrates the community realm with the private dwelling place to a greater degree than is present in most housing types. The development of spatial patterns which respond to this public/private intimacy are critical to a project which aims at maintaining the integrity of each realm.

A congregate house is an in-between place without clear precedent as a residential type. In order to work effectively it must clearly define public, semi-public, semi-private, and private space (like an inn or boarding house) which do not sacrifice the environmental qualities typical of a single family residence. Congregate dwellers live in a community which is not as intimate and homogenous as family, but is not as divergent as a community of seasonal guests at a hotel. Their community is in-between, and the place the designer is challenged to conceive must have an in-between quality to it.

This search for an understanding of the nature of shared residential space is organized in four parts. The first evaluates research regarding elderly living patterns, the second analyzes an existing congregate house in terms of form and use, the third presents formal references which might support a communal domestic environment, and the final part presents a design proposal based upon the previous analysis and a site specific and program specific context.

Each of the four parts is discussed in terms of three general headings which represent major issues of consideration regarding the nature of congregate space, they are: independence and choice, community and privacy, and order and diversity. Each of these headings relates in different ways to the form and use characteristics of the congregate environment. Consideration of each results in formulating specific goals which the designer uses as a measure of the effectiveness of the place conceived.

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The Living Patterns of Elderly Individuals

With advancing age most individuals undergo profound physical and social changes which transform their relationship to the environment in such a way that each person must modify their living patterns and/or environment in order to maintain the personal independence and self-confidence which characterized an earlier way of living. The role of the designer of a home-place for the elderly requires an understanding and acknowledgement of the changes which come with age, and a commitment to conceive of an environment which mitigates the limitations of the aged and nurtures its potential opportunities.

Many people enter elderly housing communities as a result of a need to change both their home environment and patterns of living. The decision to change the home-place may come of necessity due to physical, social, or economical incapacities, or may come of an independent decision to plan for future needs. The need to change the home-place may come from a reduction in physical/sensory capability, a radical change in personal finances, or a change in an individual's social role. The passage from the old home-place to the new is an acknowledgement of changing needs, but also requires that other needs and patterns continue as as they always have. Transformation of the home-setting

will likely be most successful if the individual's sense of independence, choice, and integrity are not undermined by the new environment.

The major changes of the social role of a person as they age come about as a result of retirement, reduction of familial responsibilities, or death of a spouse. Change of the social role alone may well require a change in the home setting, even without any physical impairment to the individual. Such a change would imply a physical environment which enhances social interaction without jeopardizing personal independence or diminishing self-esteem through institutionalization.

Retirement creates a great deal of leisure time which may be filled with new avocations that change the individual's relationship to the home. With increased time comes the need for spatial diversity as well as social diversity. The home environment, both the immediate private space and surrounding locale, must be rich with potential experiences for an individual's increased inhabitation time. Retirement may also radically effect the financial capability of a person to maintain the home-environment, or to relocate in one with commensurate amenities. Most frequently, home-changes which come about as a result of economic hardship require a move to a place of diminished size and personal amenities. Such an experience is potentially detrimental to maintaining a healthy self-image. The new environment must therefore be able to

compensate for any compromise by offering other spatial or social enhancements.

The reduction of familial responsibilities effects the social role of an elderly person and the physical requirements of the home. With child rearing done, the need for a space capable of accommodating a family is reduced, and the ability or desire of the individual to maintain such a place is questionable. If family members relocate to distant places, social contact is diminished and a void created. Entertainment which centered on family and was conducted in the home-place may become altered. The place of social interaction with family may move out of the parent-home, not only altering the physical environment of social gathering, but diminishing the parent's social role in its organization.

The loss of spouse is perhaps the most significant of the changes to the social role in terms of its affect on the home environment. The ability to manage the home-place is greatly reduced by loss of spouse. This loss affects an individual's social relationship to the community, potentially reducing the number of social contacts. Personal security in the home is also jeopardized by the loss of spouse. The loss of a spouse may require a new home-place in order to fill social needs, even if the physical setting of home is negotiable by the individual.

The decision to change the home environment may come of reductions in mobility or sensory capability. Diminution of sight, loss of hearing, reduced sense of balance, loss of stamina, hypersensitivity to glare, and variations in microclimate all critically affect the ability of an individual to comprehend and negotiate the environment. The inability to cope with environmental barriers or ambiguities create stress and anxiety. The reaction to stressful encounters with the environment is often avoided by means of withdrawal.

There is clearly a need to simplify certain aspects of the physical environment in order to create less stressful confrontations with it by a physically impaired elderly person. The circulation systems of a building should minimize direction changes in both vertical and horizontal directions. Legibility of path and place is critical to establishing an individual's physical orientation in the environment. Recognition of the need to pause should be acknowledged with places to pause - interesting places which could have diverting spatial and social qualities.

The diminution of sight and hearing make the need for a small-scale legible world more important than a large-scale disorienting one. For example, conversation is more comprehensible with a few near-voices than many voices scattered about. Similarly, long vistas in full sun might not be as pleasant as a finely detailed near-view. It seems a richly detailed, spatially lucid and topographically simple home-

place is called for.

The loss of mobility not only implies short travel distances to various utilities and amenities in the home, but the need for a rich social life which is readily accessible. With the ability to visit greatly reduced, opportunities to encounter friends and neighbors close at hand need to be increased. The liability of a conventional home environment to a person of reduced mobility is social isolation. The implication of this in terms of design is to increase the number of semi-private and semi-public spaces, places of interaction in between the public and the private realms. These places must offer neighborly opportunities rather than compulsory interaction. Freedom to choose whether or not to socialize is a measure of independence and self-esteem. The in-between opportunities for socialization need to exist as alternatives within a system of conventional public/private spatial definitions.

Physical impairment of the elderly is reflected in reduced states of general healthfulness as well as diminished capability. A larger portion of an elderly individual's time is spent at rest in bed than a younger person's. This fact has two implications in terms of planning. One is that the bedroom environment be made sufficiently diverse such that prolonged periods of time spent within are not psychologically debilitating. The second implication affects social interaction. Among elderly (among anyone) there is a need to retreat to a very private place when ill.

Thus the bedroom and its relationship to other parts of the personal space and adjacent in-between space must be carefully organized to insure isolation from public places if and when it is required.

Independence and Choice

Any domestic environment of elderly co-dwellers will of necessity bring together people of very different backgrounds and interests. The community consists of members who share similar social and/or physical needs which are met by means of social interaction with their peers in a benevolent physical setting. Though community members share common needs, they rarely share common histories. Each individual brings to the community unique living patterns. The built environment must recognize the need for community interaction without sacrificing the individual's right to be as independent and self-sufficient as he or she might choose to be.

The home-place of an elderly community has a range of spaces which accommodate varying degrees of social interaction. The population of an elderly community may vary from as little as a dozen people to as many as two hundred and fifty. Regardless of population, there is always a need to have private personal space and community public space. The way the two basic spaces (private and public) relate together creates or denies opportunities for

social interaction and personal independence and choice. Within the community certain individuals will interact with some people more than others. This means that among all public interactions there are smaller, semi-public interactions. The implication of this semi-public social order for designers is that there is a need to create part of the dwelling environment which is a different place, an in-between place, suitable for selective social interaction. The integrity of the semi-public space is insured if it is alternatively accessible from either the public or private realms. The in-between space is experienced by choice, and not of necessity by the individual during his or her daily routine.

Among the individual's living in any community there may be special social relationships between two or three people which come of particularly meaningful common bonds. This relationship may be characterized as semi-private. The semi-private realm is more of an extension of the private dwelling than it is a type of community space. Its integrity is insured through spatial legibility and patterns of accessibility. The semi-private realm is experienced through choice and not by necessity.

The issue of securing the right of choice and personal independence is critical in any shared dwelling habitat, whether it be a single-family residence or a hotel, because it supports an individual's self-esteem and creates a common bond among the different places people identify as home.

The difference between a prison or hospital and a hotel or dormitory, though all are in principle dwelling places, is the lack of independence of the dweller occupying the former and the ability of the dweller to move freely through a range of social/physical settings in the latter.

The right to choose and independently control all or part of the home environment is in part an issue of management and in part a function of the physical setting. The physical setting alone cannot secure independence and choice, but it can deny them by not creating opportunities. For example, in the traditional single family residence a parent might permit a child to rearrange or add furniture to his or her room, but if the room is too small to accommodate more than a bed and dresser, and permits them to be located on only one of the room's four walls due to the patterns of circulation and dimensional organization, no choice really exists. Clearly the parent (management) may choose to deny the child a measure of independence, in which case the physical setting is of no consequence, but if the parent does permit the child to plan independently the physical environment then has the potential to offer fulfillment of personal expression or not.

Central to the idea and image of home-place is the concept of independence and choice. Throughout our lives we live in places which we can to some degree manipulate in terms of use or appearance in order to express our individuality. The elderly community living in a home-place

are socially and emotionally supported by environments that guarantee choice because such places create associations with past home-places. To deny choice and independence is to make the dwelling an institutional place.

Community and Privacy

The array of individuals living in an elderly domestic community engage in certain general patterns of living which may be ordered in terms of the degree of privacy or community each requires. A great deal of research has been done as to the living patterns of the elderly and their relationship to the public, semi-public, semi-private, and private places of the built environment.

The most important public space in a dwelling environment is the pathway. The public path is the circulation system of the environment, not unlike the blood vessels of the body, which vary in size according to the needs of the tissue and organs they serve. So too the public path varies in scale and direction with the spaces it relates to. The public path links private personal space to the community at large through a series of in-between places. The in-between places are semi-public and semi-private transitional spaces which create opportunity for diverse social interaction and sensory experience.

The most important private space is personal place. The community is composed of a series of personal places,

ultimate privacies, which are related to each other by in-between places arrayed along the public path. The activities of the personal place are diverse and range in degree from very private to semi-private. Connections may be made between the semi-private parts of the personal place and both the semi-private in-between and the public path. Two linkages are therefore possible because of the presence of the in-between in addition to the public path, and are needed to insure independence and choice.

The activities of the personal place include leisure, food preparation, eating, sleeping, dressing, and personal hygiene. Leisure activities vary widely, but usually include entertaining, watching T.V., sewing and crafts, reading, watching others, letter-writing, and so forth. The most private of functions involve sleeping, dressing, and bathroom use. More public are leisure activities, food preparation, and dining. The more public activities of the personal environment are also characteristics of the in-between and public realms and may be used to spatially interface with those realms. Thus the dining table for two can become the dining table for four within the semi-private in-between and the communal dining table for eight within the public realm. The unit kitchen for individual meal preparation may become the roommate shared kitchen for larger meals in the semi-private realm, may become the large

eat-in kitchen for a handful of residents and/or guests in the semi-public realm.

The activities of the public spaces may differ in usage from the private realm depending upon the difference in physical scale of two realms. If the private dwelling space is large, public leisure activities like card-playing and club-meetings could conceivably occur within it. Most often this is not the case, and such activities, along with tenant meetings, dances, billiards, and beano games take place solely in the public realm. The in-between spaces might also accommodate smaller scale versions of these functions. A card game for four might as easily occur at a semi-public dining table as in a more public space, and in fact the opportunity to do so would represent a meaningful social choice on the part of residents as well as creating associations with times past when the dining room or kitchen table might have served a dweller in a similiar fashion.

Utilitarian activities also involve public space usage. The collection of mail, or the act of laundering clothes take place more in the public realm than the private. These activities imply social contact among all community residents. Everyone receives mail and does laundry. The nature of the public space's physical definition can either encourage or prohibit social interaction by relating mail collection and laundering to place spaces or path spaces.

The increased amount of leisure time and the general lack of physical mobility indicate that elderly individuals

spend a great deal more time within the home-place than do younger people. This increased exposure to the home requires it be experientially diverse. Diversity of potential settings for homelike activity is thus a requirement of the community dwelling. Further, the varied background and living patterns of the elderly living in a common domestic environment suggest a more elaborate system of public/private spatial relationships than is typical in more traditional housing.

Order and Diversity

There is obviously a need for a wide range of spaces in community dwelling environments for the elderly. The specific nature of the space and the ordering principles which relate them together need to be clear and simple without being mindless or dull. With order comes legibility and an understanding of one's environment. With diversity comes richness through individual expressiveness. The organization of the environment must clearly communicate what is public, private, and in-between as well as allow for some variation to each territory in order that changing needs be fulfilled and place personalization is not inhibited.

The spatial needs of the elderly vary widely depending upon the background, sex, and health of the individual. Some elderly may bring with them (or wish to) a great deal of furnishings from the former home place, others may come from

institutional settings with little or no personal belongings. Elderly women in general require (and desire) a more elaborately furnished personal environment than men. Finally, the changing physical capabilities of the elderly dictate different home environments over time. A physical disability acquired after the initial settlement may require a smaller, simpler home-place with greater connectedness to social supports than required at first inhabitation.

The social setting which each individual wants/needs vary as widely as spatial requirements. The introverted personality may require a great deal of freedom to be apart from public interaction whereas the extravert may want to be well connected to the community's public network of experiences and space. As physical requirements change, so do social ones. A grieving widower may appear initially to be an introverted member of the community, but with time develop more extraverted characteristics.

The private physical setting required may vary over time and require adaptation to new needs. The ordering of the private space therefore must clearly distinguish it from what is public, and simultaneously allow for and give clues about change. If a private space needs to expand spatially, or increase its interactive relationship with the semi-private and semi-public places, the opportunity to do so and method by which the change is to come about should be clear.

The public setting is of a more permanent nature and

larger scale than the private realm, and should assume spatial definitions which make its territory legible. If the private spaces are the most variable, the public spaces are the least, and as with usage issues, the two are related by means of in-between, or semi-public, semi-private realms, having some of the spatial characteristics of both. Thus a semi-public leisure space might have the smaller scale of a private leisure space, but be made of the more permanent materials of the public realm. The semi-private leisure space may be made of materials similar to the private realm, but have a more public scale, or accommodate shared amenities.

The ordering of the domestic community spaces into repetative elements establishes the relatedness of the individual's home-place to the community home place. The incorporation of environmental diversity within the ordering system establishes the distinctiveness of community members.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAPTAIN CLARENCE ELDRIDGE HOUSE,
HYANNIS, MASSACHUSETTS

General Description

The Eldridge house is a relatively recent (1981) attempt to give architectural expression to the social concepts of congregate living. The project is the work of architects Barry Korobkin and Eric Jahan, and sociologist

John Zeisel. Those who have studied it, regardless of their background (architectural or social) universally credit it with being an extremely sensitive and humane design effort. Those who live there, and work there, seem delighted, with and proud of their home.

The Eldridge house is sited in suburban Hyannis, a short walk from the town's main street. The house is about 11,000 square feet in area and accommodates 20 residents in 18 dwelling units as well as a part time administrator (see p. 20-21).

The dwellings units, which represent the private realm, are quite small (275 square feet) and contain a sleeping/leisure space, half-bathroom, closet, unit kitchen, and small dining table. The dwelling units account for about 50% of the floor area of the building, the rest being taken up in public path and shared places.

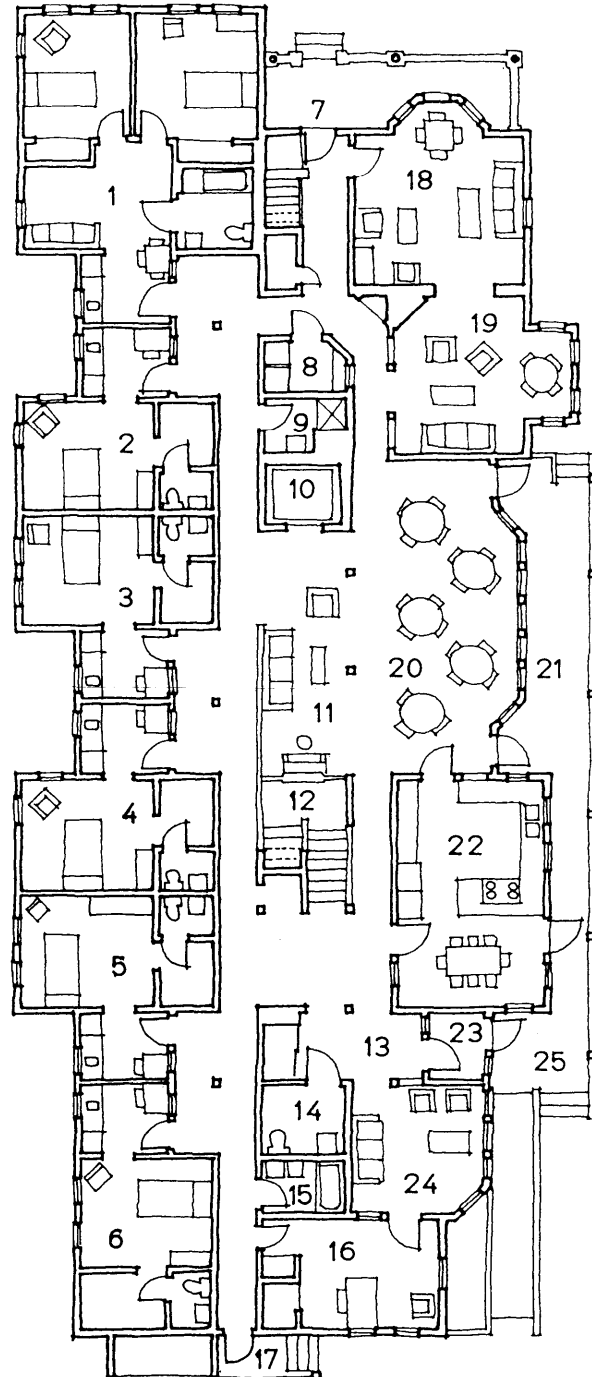
The minimal nature of the private realm required that public leisure spaces exist as extensions of the private realm. Some of these spaces are parlor-like, others fulfill needs for large-group dining and social gatherings. There is also an eat-in kitchen, at the scale of a single family residence and detailed in like manner. Bathing and showering facilities are shared in addition to a common laundry.

The plan is organized around a tall central space which connects the upper floor of private dwellings with the dwellings and public space of the floor below. The tall central space floods the building core with light from

ELDRIDGE HOUSE

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

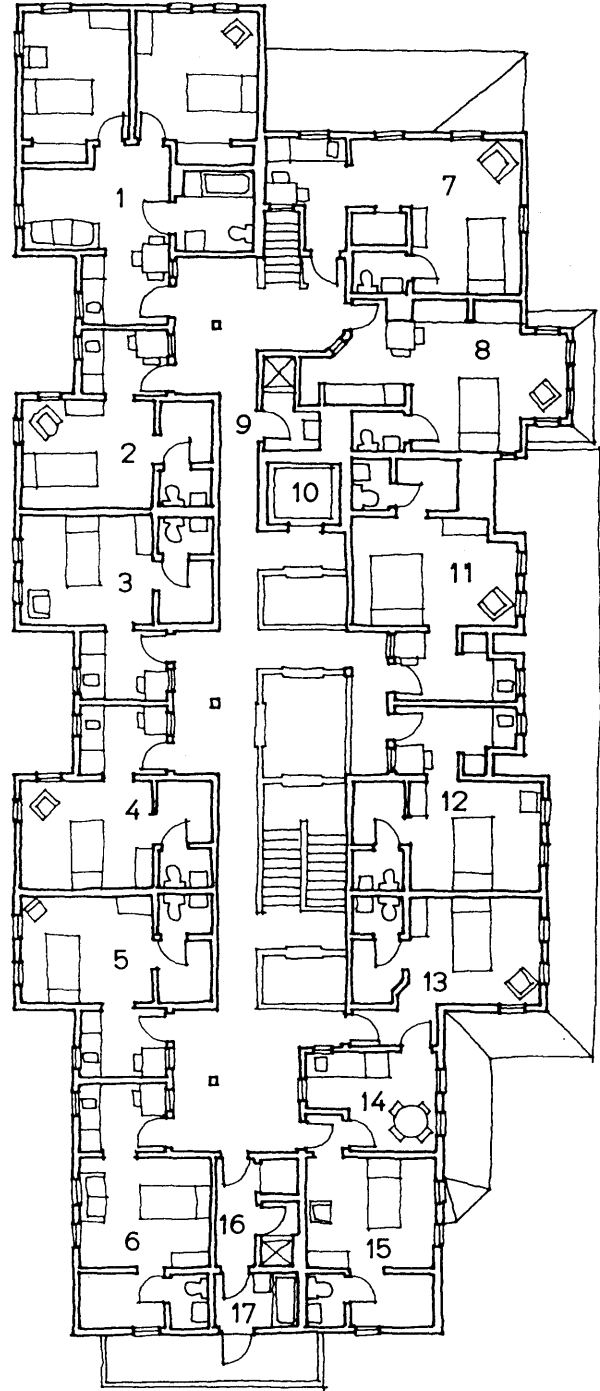
1. 2 BEDROOM DWELLING
- 2.
- 3.
4. 1 BEDROOM DWELLINGS
- 5.
- 6.
7. ENTRY
8. LAUNDRY
9. SHOWER
10. ELEVATOR
11. WAITING
12. STAIR
13. FOYER
14. PUBLIC TOILET
15. TUB ROOM
16. MANAGER
17. EXIT
18. PARLOR
19. PARLOR
20. DININGROOM
21. PORCH
22. KITCHEN
23. VESTIBULE
24. WAITING ROOM
25. ENTRY



ELDRIDGE HOUSE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1. 2 BEDROOM DWELLING
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
5. 1 BEDROOM DWELLINGS
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
9. SHOWER
10. ELEVATOR
- 11.
12. 1 BEDROOM DWELLINGS
- 13.
14. KITCHEN
15. 1 BEDROOM DWELLING
16. SHOWER
17. TUB ROOM



operable roof skylights. The central core of the building accommodates a stairway and an elevator as well as shared bathrooms and laundry.

The spaces of the house are at the scale of a single family residence. With the exception of the large central dining room, no space exceeds 15 feet x 15 feet approximately, and most measure 12 x 12 feet or less. This creates an extremely intimate ambience with strong home-place associations.

The detailing of the house further reinforces the residential feel of the place. The flooring, doors, and trimwork are all wood, which enriches and contrasts the light-reflecting white plaster walls. Eldridge House is basically an addition (8,500 square feet) of new construction to an existing Victorian residence, whose fireplace and china closet still act as minor focal points to shared spaces. The long, low front porch of Eldridge House mimics the vernacular detailing of other Hyannis houses, and further intensifies home-like associations.

INDEPENDENCE AND CHOICE

The issue of independence and choice is effectively resolved at the Eldridge House through careful design of the public pathway system and its points of access to public and private space. The careful deployment of a range of shared amenities and utility spaces, a repetition and transformation of private space living patterns in the public realm

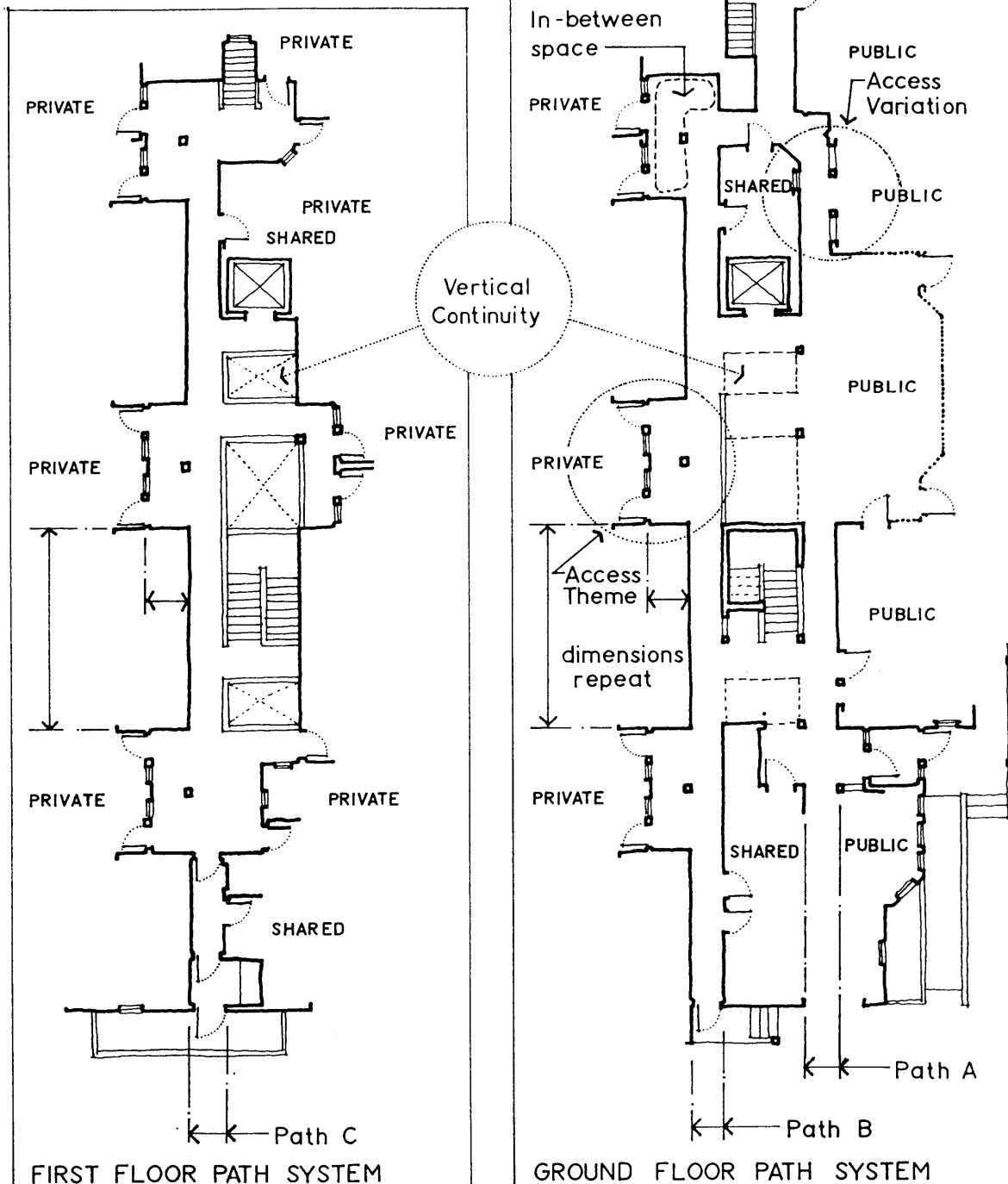
all support independent decision-making.

The public pathway (see p. 24-25) is organized as two linear circulation spines on either side of the central atrium space. The atrium accommodates two means of vertical movement, an elevator and a open stair. One of the linear path-spines links six downstairs units together, while the other joins the shared public spaces together. The spines join together at either end of the house and connect with the outside. At the floor above, only one path-spine repeats. Seven of the second floor's dwellings are directly connected to the spine, the remaining five are joined with it by perpendicular pathway spurs.

The effect of this seemingly extravagant path network is to provide two means of access from any dwelling to the shared spaces or to the outside (see p. 26-27). It is possible for a resident to by-pass the shared kitchen or parlors for example, or to walk close-by on the way home to the private dwelling. The opportunity for social interaction is present, but the choice to encounter or avoid it is left to the individual.

The points of access to the public and private spaces of Eldridge House are designed in order to create opportunities for independent expression and to make social interaction optional rather than compulsory. The entrances to private units from the public pathway widens to form a

ELDRIDGE HOUSE



Order — through repetition of formal and use patterns.

Diversity — through variation of the theme.

Independence & Choice — through provision of multiple paths & redundant settings for activity routines.

Privacy is supported by in-between buffer space at public/private boundaries.

ELDRIDGE HOUSE

Multiple path systems are necessary wherever shared community space and individual private space co-exist in order to provide the dweller with a range of choices. ▷

Path A

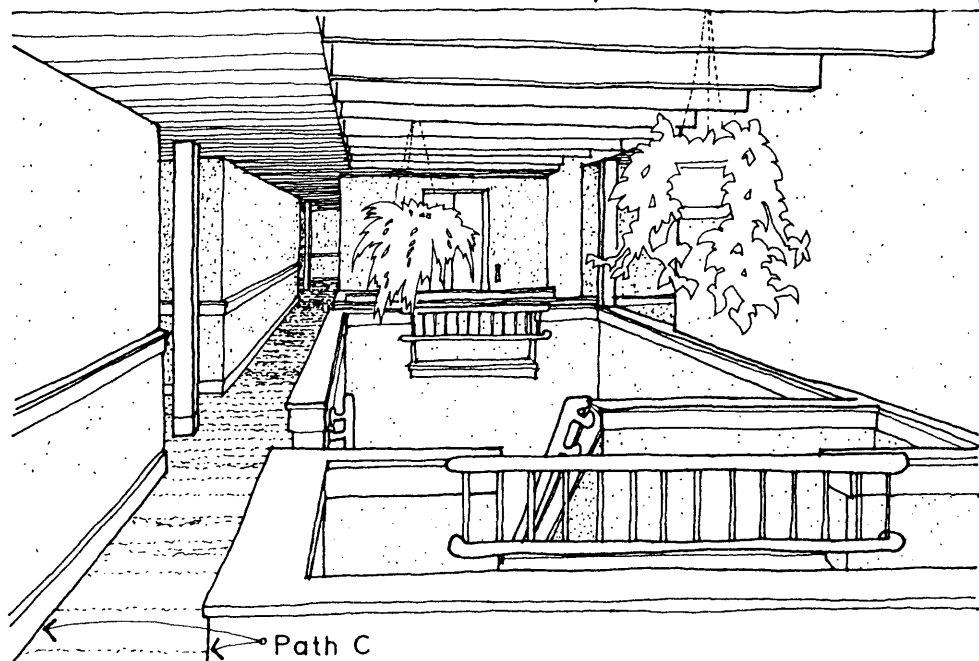
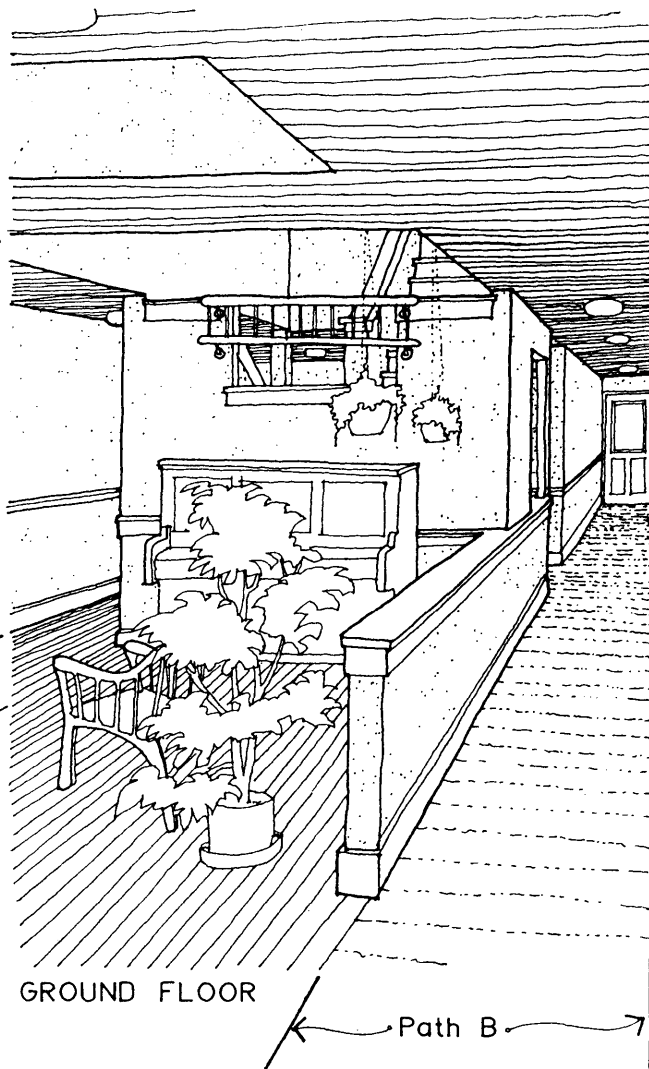
As the amount of community space decreases relative to the individual's space the need for multiple paths diminishes. ▽

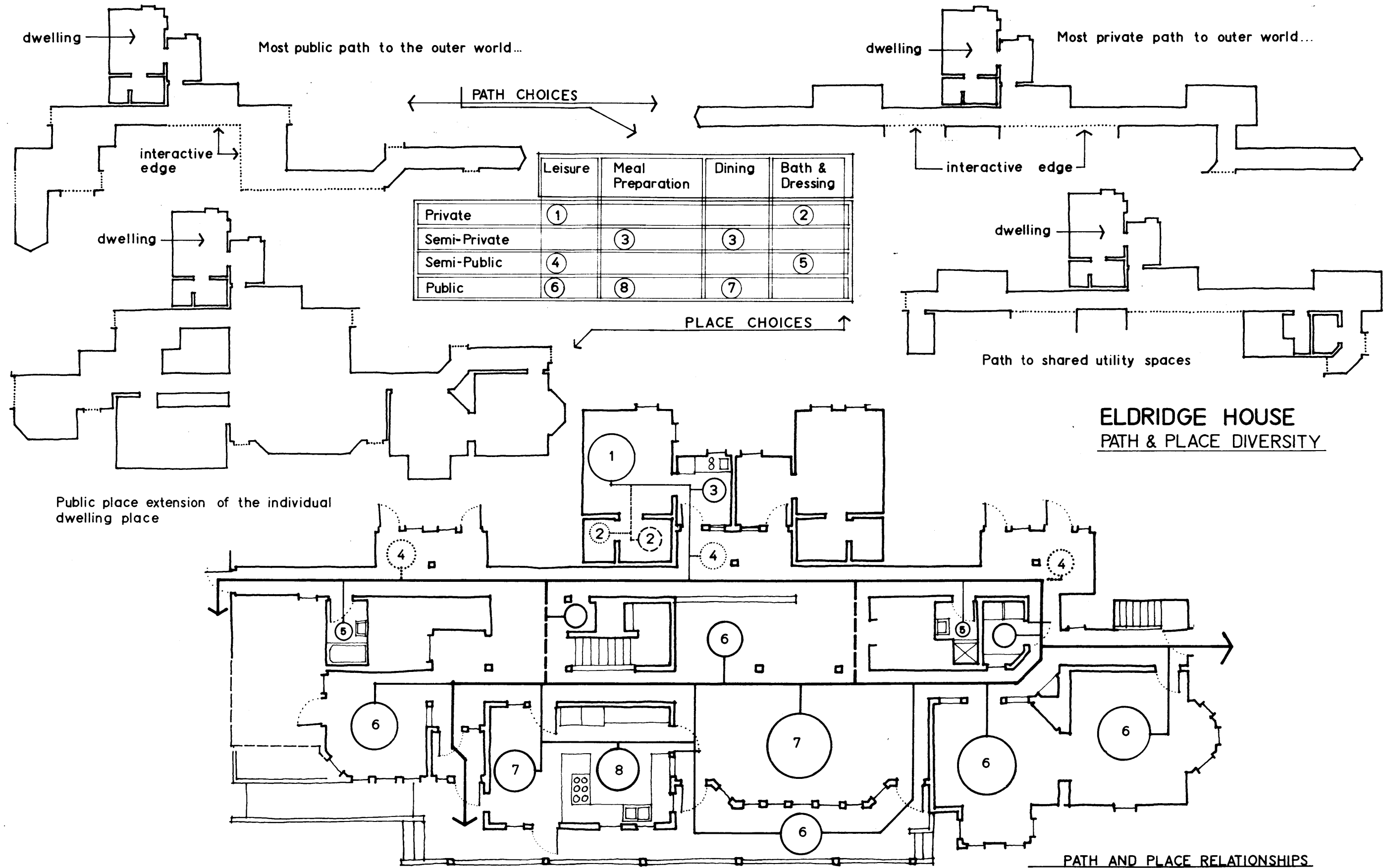
GROUND FLOOR

Path B

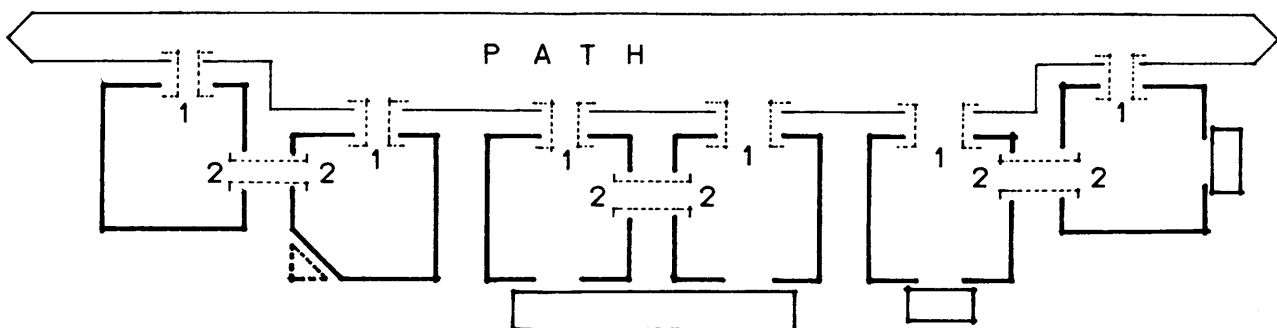
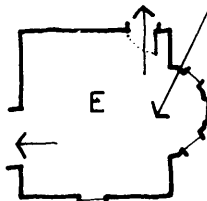
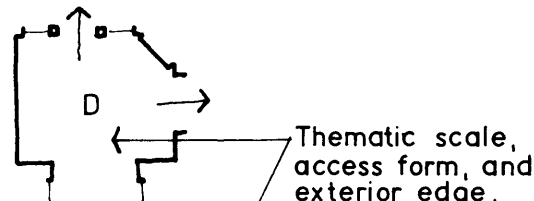
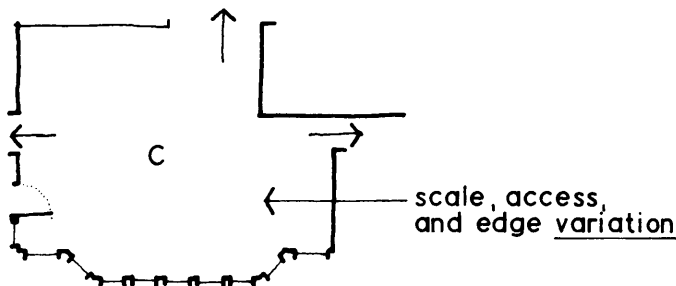
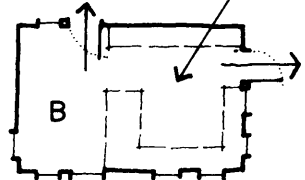
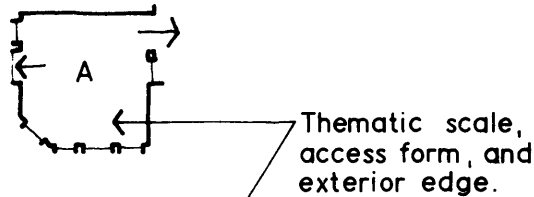
FIRST FLOOR

Path C

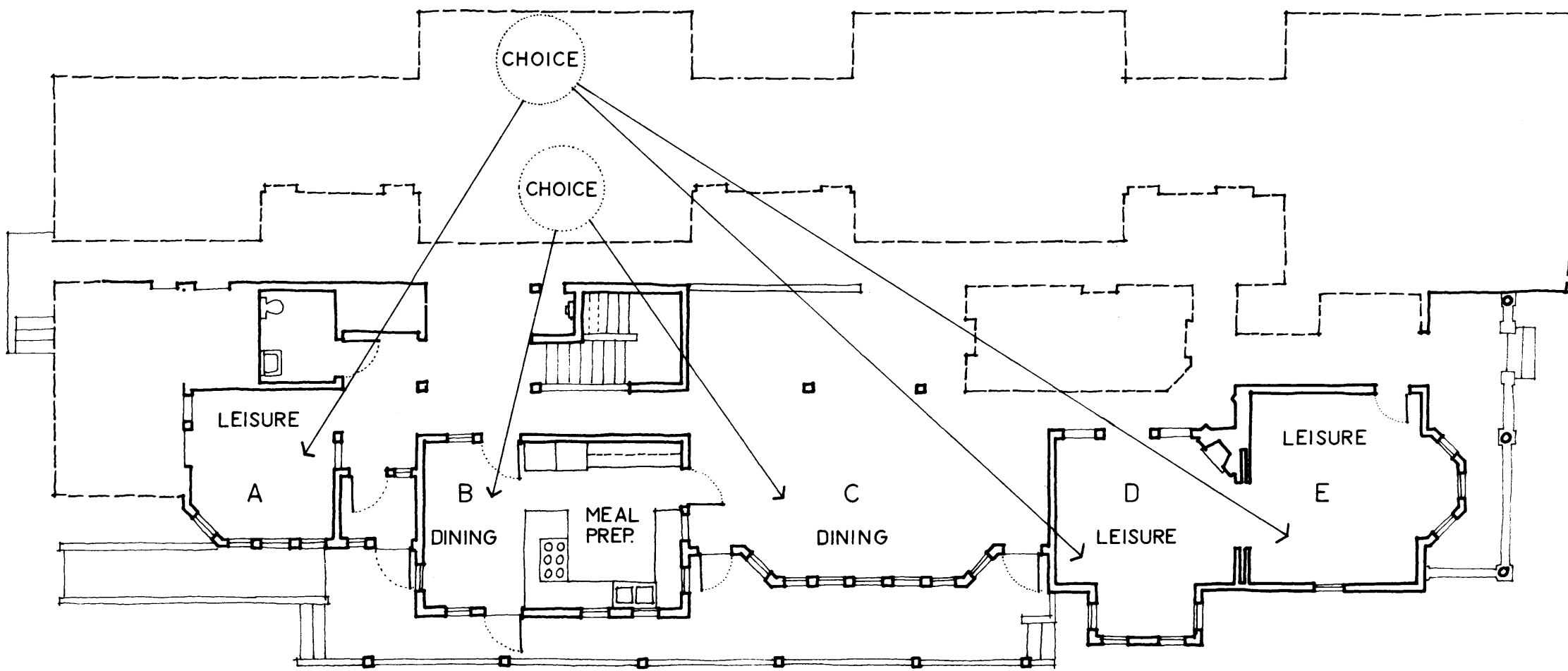




ELDRIDGE HOUSE
THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

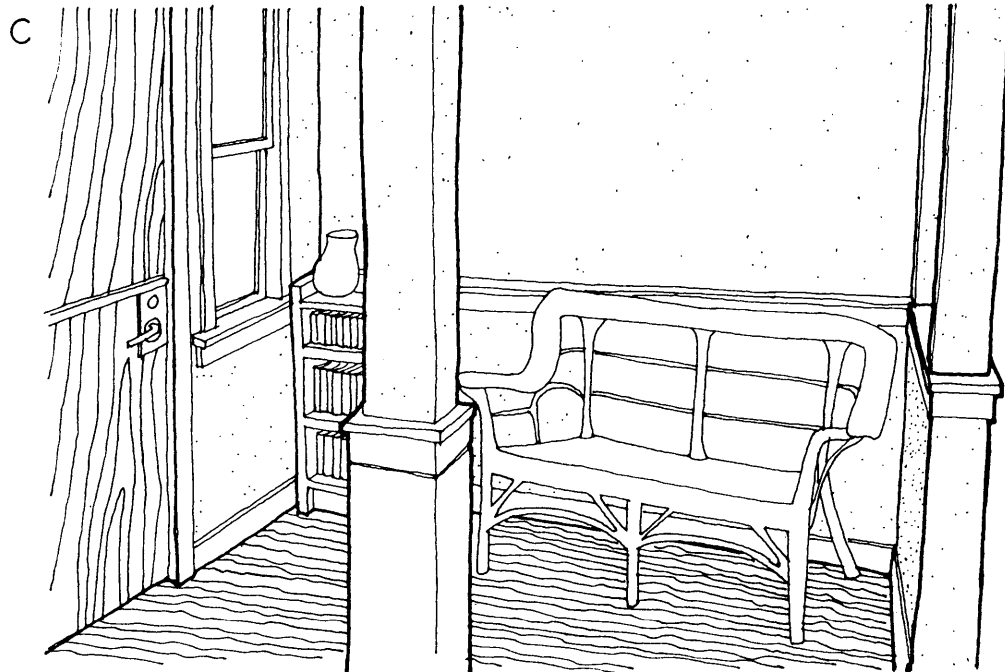


THE ORDERING of PUBLIC PLACE, PATH, and ACCESS



semi-public alcove (see p. 29-30). The dwelling unit is entered via a wooden dutch door which allows the doorway opening to be totally open, partially open, or completely closed. Adjacent to the dutch door is a wood-trimmed double hung window. The window allows visual and voice contact between the private kitchen/eating space and the public way. The semi-public threshold space is about 3 feet deep and provides space for small seating arrangements. The side to side arrangement of entries widens this threshold to about thirteen feet and defines a neighborly space, a space which two privacies share adjacent to the public way. The choice to manipulate dutch doors or double hung windows is left to the residents. The entrances to the shared public spaces from the public way obviously have no semi-private threshold, but three of the spaces (parlor, waiting, and eat-in kitchen) do have screen like definitions adjacent to the paths, which makes visual or audial previewing possible in order to reduce the tension which sometimes accompanies walking blindly into an unexpected social setting (see lower fig., p. 29).

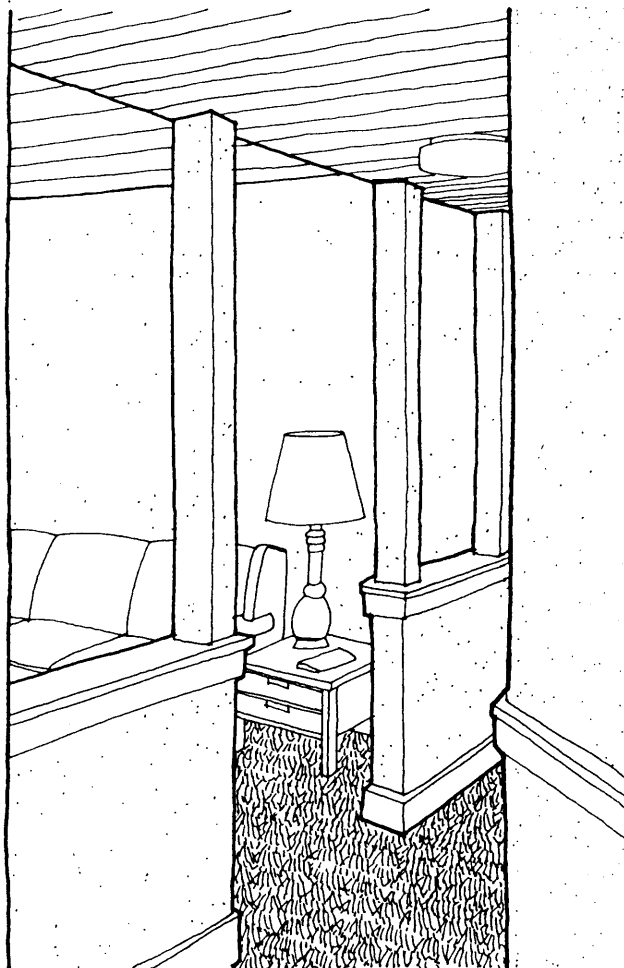
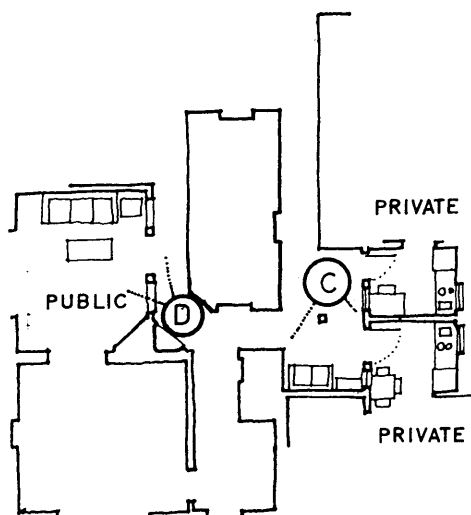
The thoughtful replication and transformation of private space functions in the shared space network allows for a wide range of choice concerning food preparation, dining, and leisure activities. Each unit has its own facilities for preparing small meals, but residents also have access to a larger communal kitchen as an alternative place to cook



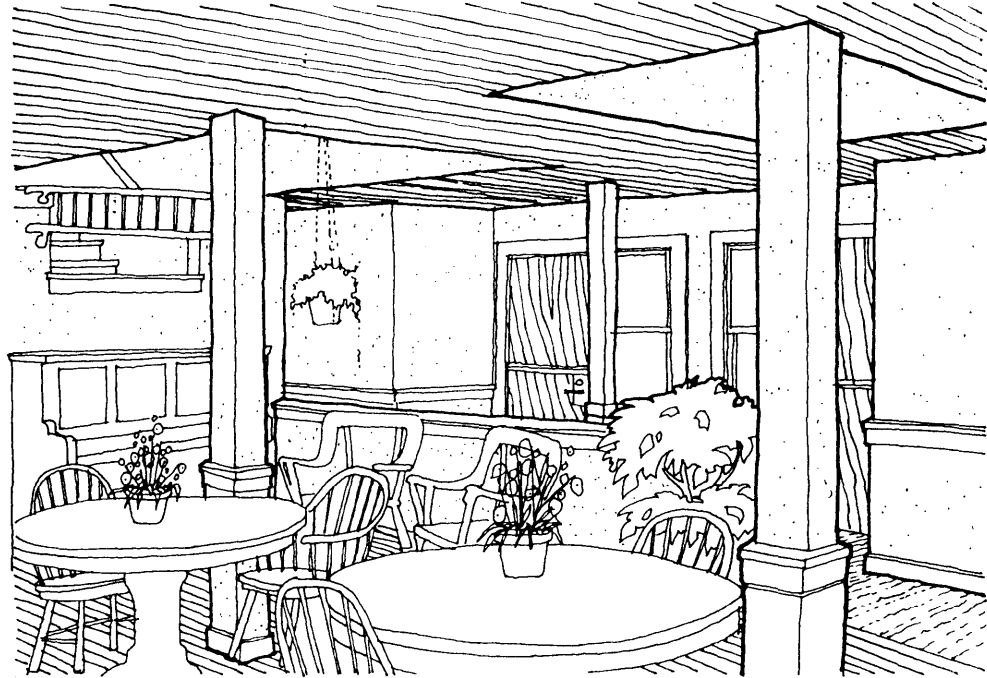
An example of a place between the public path and private dwelling defined by columns and low walls. △

ELDRIDGE HOUSE

This public parlor is accessible from the path through a screen like enclosure which is of the same formal vocabulary as that of the private space although less dense. ▹



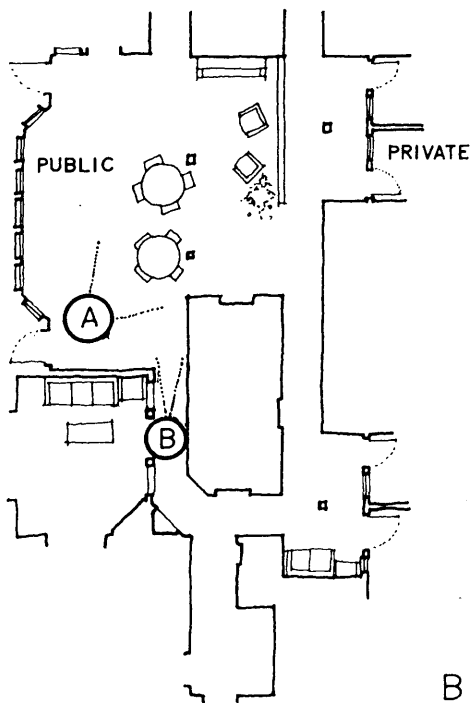
A



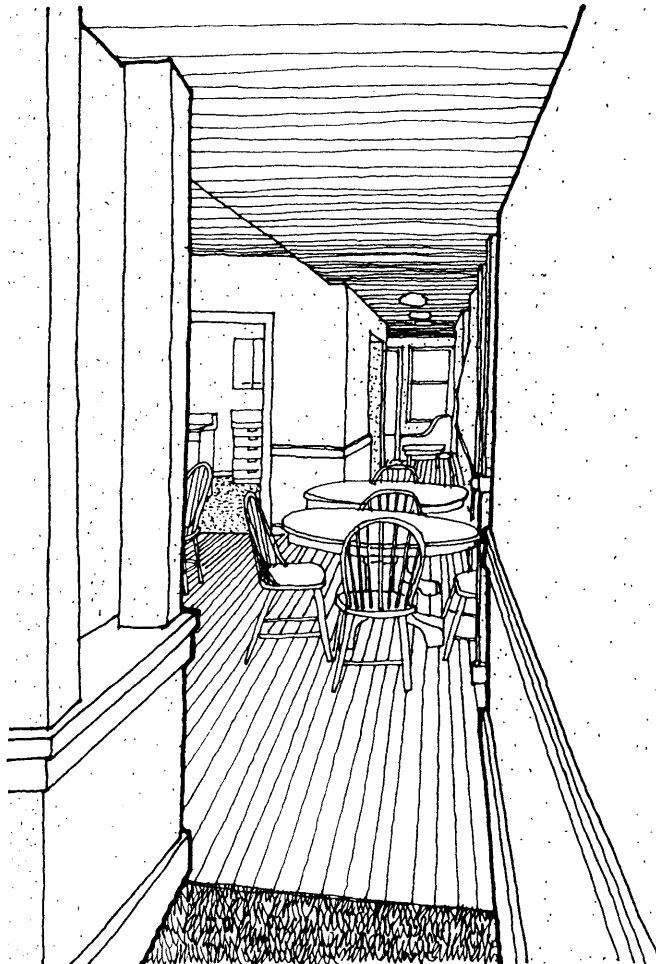
The background private space is differentiated from the foreground public space by increasing the density of the private enclosure. △

ELDRIDGE HOUSE

Where no enclosure definition exists the path and place overlap. Diversion of the path decreases the integrity of the place. ▷



B



and dine (see p. 27). A very large dining room offers another dining option. Similarly, the leisure activities of reading, watching T.V. or entertaining may occur in the personal private space, but may also occur in either of the two parlors. The success of the shared leisure spaces resides in their scale and detail as well as their number and location. They replicate the dimensions and furnishings of typical single family residences and by doing so make strong home-place associations not accomplished in institutional settings.

COMMUNITY and PRIVACY

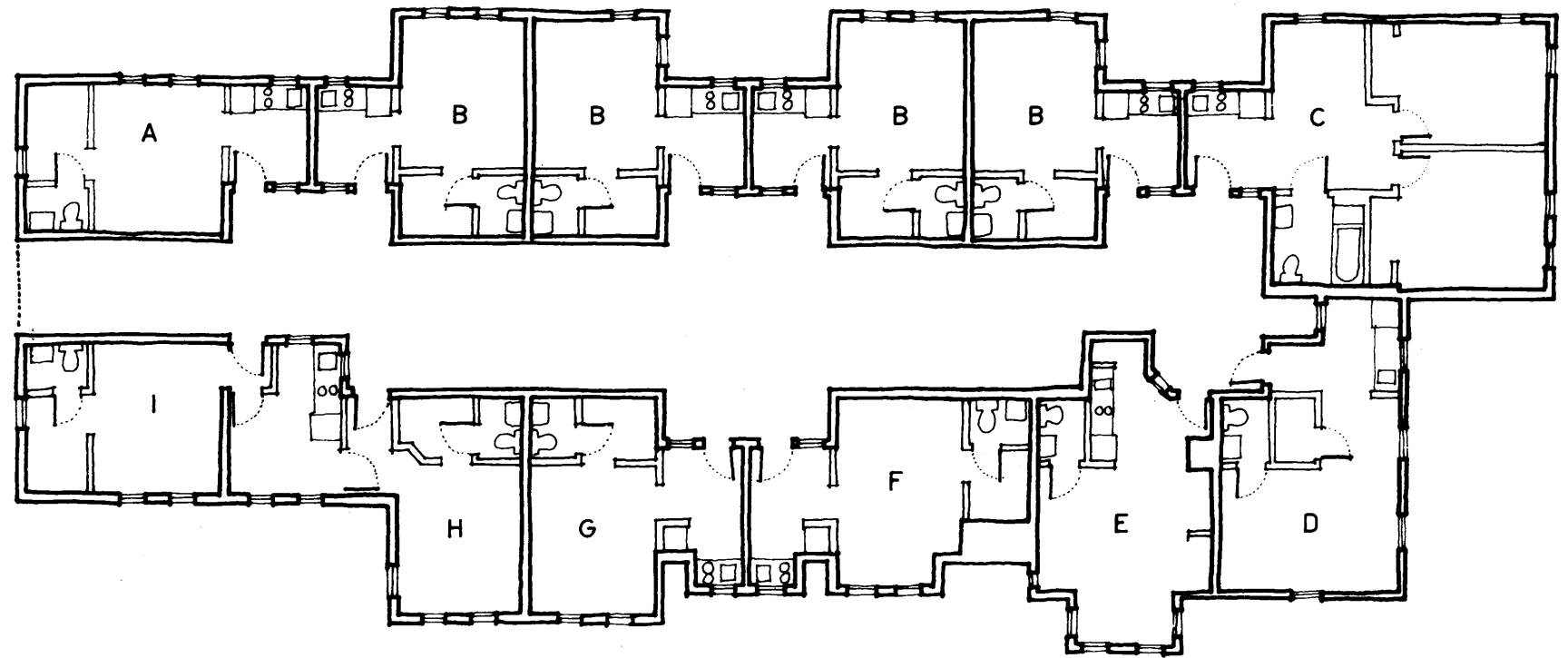
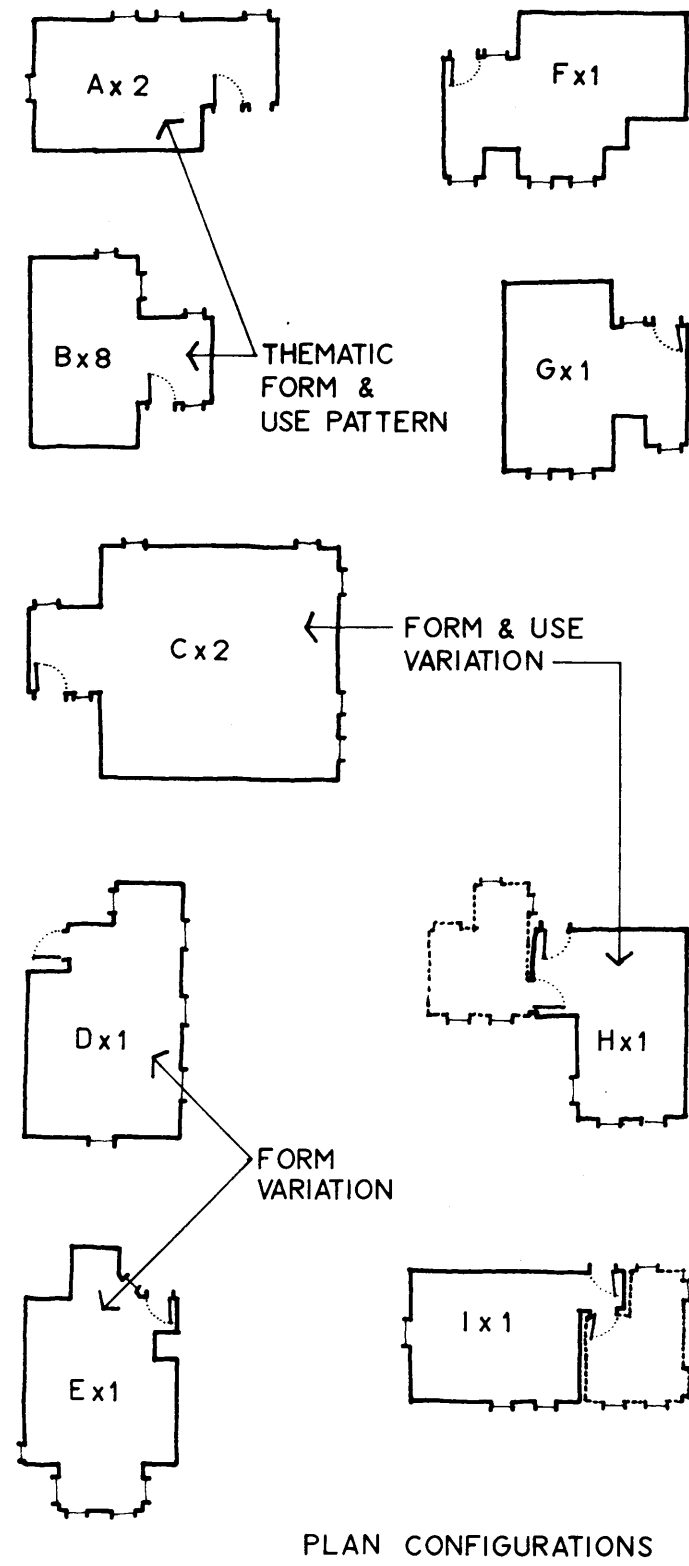
The Eldridge House was conceived as a congregate living environment for elderly people and its spatial organization in terms of community and privacy reflects the social organization of place.

According to the First National Conference of Congregate Housing for Older People, congregate housing by definition is "an assisted independent group living environment that offers the elderly who are functionally impaired or socially deprived, but otherwise in good health, the residential accommodations and supporting services they need to maintain or return to a semi-independent lifestyle and prevent premature or unnecessary institutionalization, as they grow older." The organization and form of shared community space at the Eldridge House is closely related to

the spatial and use organization of the private realm in order that the community space may become an extension of the private realm, rather than a counterpoint to it.

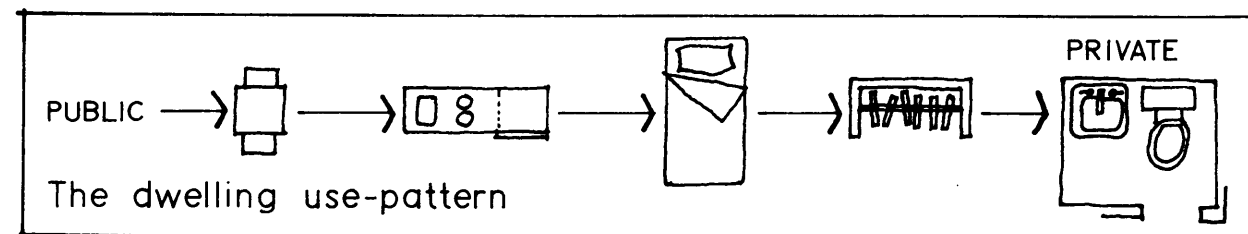
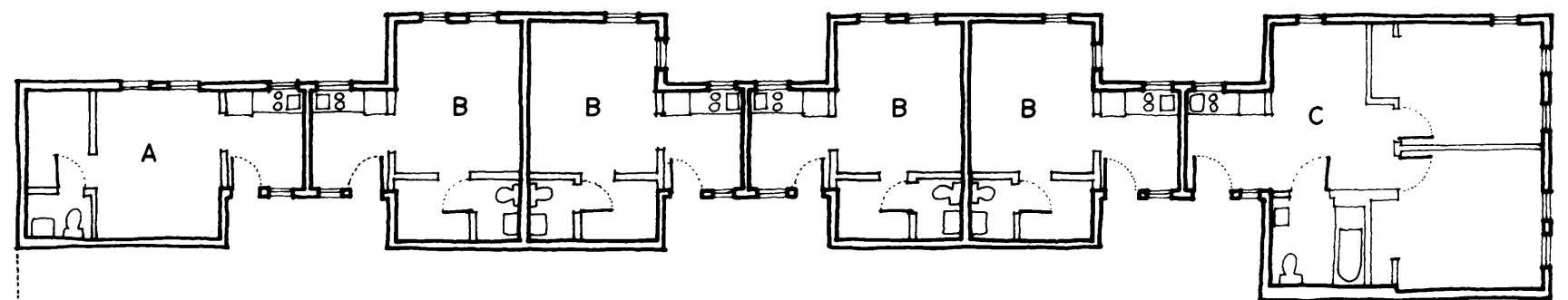
The private realm consists of dwelling units which can accommodate all resident uses except bathing and laundering (see p. 33). Thus a completely independent living pattern is not possible at Eldridge House. Residents share tub and shower rooms as well as a laundry. Additional social contact is likely along the public path, due to its spatial openness and the intensified visual and voice relationship of dwellings entries to the public path. The smallness of the private realm, of which the largest space is about ten (10) feet by twelve (12) feet, implies that long term occupancy might be more uncomfortable than the occupancy of public spaces part of the time.

The public spaces of Eldridge House, with the exception of the dining room, are of house-room dimensions and are defined/contained spatially by four enclosing walls (see p.27). The only open and spatially expansive space is the dining room/ atrium, which doubles as a meeting place. Two small parlors work as a T.V. room and a library. They also function as spaces where larger groups can be entertained. The eat in kitchen is a particularly popular social space, which is used for coffee-drinking, card-playing, and conversation. Even the small waiting room near the entry has a sitting room feel to it. The type of furnishings and their arrangement are similar to those of the private units,



ELDRIDGE HOUSE
ORDER & DIVERSITY of PRIVATE DWELLINGS

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

which further intensifies the linkage between public and private. There is also an open arrangement of furniture and a piano under the skylight which serves as a resting place near the elevator. The tub and shower rooms are accessible from the more private path spine while the laundry is open to the public path spine.

The in-between shared space at Eldridge House is much less successful than the public and private realms. The shared "front porches" at each dwelling unit entry form neighborly spaces of twos and threes. Unlike the community spaces shared by all residents, and unlike private dwelling space, the in-between spaces are not as contained, and do not in most case have square or near-square plan forms. They have no windows to allow views out or light in, and are not screened from the path system in order that they have spatial integrity apart from circulation patterns. These in-between spaces do work as entry thresholds which are suitable for the display of personal items - and in fact plants, pottery, glassware, and bookcases have moved out of the private dwellings and into these spaces. There might be some merit however, to more elaborate shared space at these locations in order to diminish the distance between shared parlors and some of the more distant dwelling units.

The concept of clustering community spaces is generally accepted as a means to increase social interaction. The linear organization of the Eldridge House community spaces on the first floor supports this concept. No community spaces,

other than shared tub and shower rooms, occur on the upper level. The open core atrium spatially links the two levels, but this vertical linkage is more a result of the need to bring in natural light than to promote social interaction. For example, the two parlors are not open to the atrium, and neither is the kitchen, which renders the open wells at the second floor useless in terms of social previewing by the upper level residents of the lower level community spaces. One minor but delightful aspect of the open well is the acoustic openness it provides when the piano is played - the entire core is sometimes filled with music. In general, community spaces at Eldridge House tend to encourage movement from the scattered dwellings to the street-oriented first floor public rooms as a means by which residents (and the resident administrator) can interact.

ORDER AND DIVERSITY

The environment created at Eldridge House is simultaneously legible and rich. Its clarity derives from the repetition of details and dimensions throughout the building, while its uniqueness comes of varying patterns of access, spatial enclosure, individual dwelling plan, and treatment of natural lighting. The overall effect is somewhat like a block in Boston's Back Bay or Beacon Hill in that a wide range of distinct privacies exist independently within a larger community infrastructure. The house is like

a city.

The dwelling unit entires are the most common repetative element at Eldridge House. Though there is occasional variation, all entries are recessed from the public path and are at a right angle to it. Each has a wooden dutch door and double hung window paired with a neighbor's. Of the eighteen dwellings, fourteen entries are identical, the remaining four employ the same details but vary the entrance plan form.

Each public space entry is unique, and in being so clearly communicates what is public and what is private from the public path. The differences in entries into public space include the elimination of doors and double-hung windows, and the enlargement of opening widths. Almost all entries are at right angles to the public way, and almost all are constructed to create a spatial definition between public place and path. Similar materials and detailing are used on all entries, whether public or private. The effect of changes in dimension and degree of openness distinguish public place from private (diversity) while similar detailing and directionality relate public to private (order).

While the spatial enclosure of each private dwelling unit repeats throughout Eldridge House, the amount and nature of enclosure varies a great deal in the public realm. All dwelling units are related to the internal public path by dutch doors and double hung windows adjacent to the dining/kitchen privacy. The remainder of the apartment

consists of a bedroom, bathroom, and closet. The bedroom has views outside and is accessed directly from the kitchen in all single room units (a total of sixteen). The bath and closets are windowless rooms accessible directly from the bedroom. Private baths and closets form the solid spatial definitions along the public way, and kitchen/dining areas form the voids (see p. 33).

Spatial enclosure and definition varies greatly at the public realm (see p. 27). Each parlor has a bay window, but one is rectangular while the other is a half-octagon. One bay opens directly to the outdoors while the other opens to a small porch. One parlor is entered through an open screen-like enclosure of columns and low-walls while the other is entered through a single door. One relates openly to the public path at the laundry, while the other is very introverted. The dining area is defined solely by furniture placement, it is no "room" at all, but rather a territory between the public path and the abutting front porch. It is a very extroverted space, made so because of the floor to ceiling glass wall defining its boundary with the front porch, and its openness to the public path, where no spatial or physical boundary distinctions exist (see p. 30). The eat-in kitchen actually mimics the door and window details of private entries, making a counterpoint in relationship to other public spaces. The kitchen also opens onto the front porch in a similar manner to the dining room, although the kitchen sills are higher. Finally, the waiting room has a

screen-like relation to the public way similar to that of one of the parlors, and though its relationship to the outside involves much glass for visibility, it has no bay window or porch.

The repetition of private dwelling entries belies the variation in unit plan form (see p. 33). All units are organized in a heirarchical way, from the publicness of kitchen to the privacy of dressing and toilet. There is however, a great deal of plan form variation. Of the eighteen units, two are two bedroom units and have a full bath. Of the remaining sixteen, two share a common kitchen though each has an individual entry. Of the remaining fourteen two have radically different plan forms because they were adapted into the shell of the old house. Of the remaining twelve two have different bedroom/bath orientations because they are at the building's corner. Of the remaining ten two have tiny unit kitchens tucked into front-facing roof dormers. The remaining eight units are identical. The diversity of form within the planning heirarchy provides a sense of equality and individuality among residents.

The treatment of natural lighting further intensifies the distinction of public and private space through order and diversity. Private dwellings all receive light through individual windows flush with the exterior walls and of uniform sill height. The use of skylights, horizontal bands of glass, low sills, and bay windows are strictly reserved

for the public places. There is a strong and consistent association with high natural light levels and panoramic views with the public realm, The private realm is darker and visually restricted.

The ordering of space at Eldridge House is through the association of repetitive spatial elements and usage heirarchies within the private realm, and with variations to that ordering system in the public realm. The range of public spaces are different enough to offer meaningful place-choice without disassociating themselves entirely from the scale, detail, and forms of the private realm. Thus a public space may have more windows than the dwelling, but they will be the same window types. The access to a public room may echo the dimensions and openings of a paired, recessed dwelling entry, but eliminate the window sash and door. The effect is one of relation through variation. This quality gives Eldridge House a great deal of spatial congruence and legibility while filling it with numerous special places for a variety of living patterns.

Formal References

The Eldridge House is clearly an excellent example of shared residential space. One example alone however is not

sufficient to clearly understand the principles of what community living implies for residential place-making. Given another context the form of Eldridge House would doubtless change though the principles of its organization relating to community socialization might not. Other precedents from different contexts offer further insights into the nature of shared places of residence.

In the past, extended families required living places which ordered the built environment in ways similar to modern congregate housing. Other places of community interaction, although not permanent dwelling places, offer further references for the organization of territories in terms of social interaction. For example, the palazzi of Italy during the middle ages were able to accommodate numerous communal activities in the home-place of aristocratic clans. The country inns of Early America were able to provide settings in which strangers and townspeople could socialize in a home-like, sheltered environment.

The need for in-between spaces in the congregate setting seems clear if opportunities for a wide range of social interaction and/or physical change are to be accommodated. References for in-between places are not unique to domestic environments however, they exist wherever spatial transitions exist between inside and outside, public and private, or path and place.

The congregate setting requires a clearly legible heirarchical ordering of space from the community to the individual realm. Throughout history many places have been planned using heirarchical ordering, from dwellings to worship places. Some offer important insights into ways of distinguishing with space one realm from the other.

The problem of finding references for communal living places is not one solved by the seeking out of places with identical living patterns. It is more universal than that. An understanding of the principles embodied at the Eldridge House gives clues as to the spatial definition and ordering of a congregate environment. That other references exist from the past indicate that congregate housing for the elderly in the modern context may be innovative, but that congregate living in more general terms is quite old and its principles regarding the built world were understood long ago.

Independence and Choice

In order to provide any dweller with a reasonable measure of independence within the home-place, opportunities for a variety of spatial and social experiences should be offered. The presence of opportunities to engage in, bypass, or withdraw from a given physical/social setting may be clearly represented in spatial terms. The circulation patterns of the path system, the methods by which access

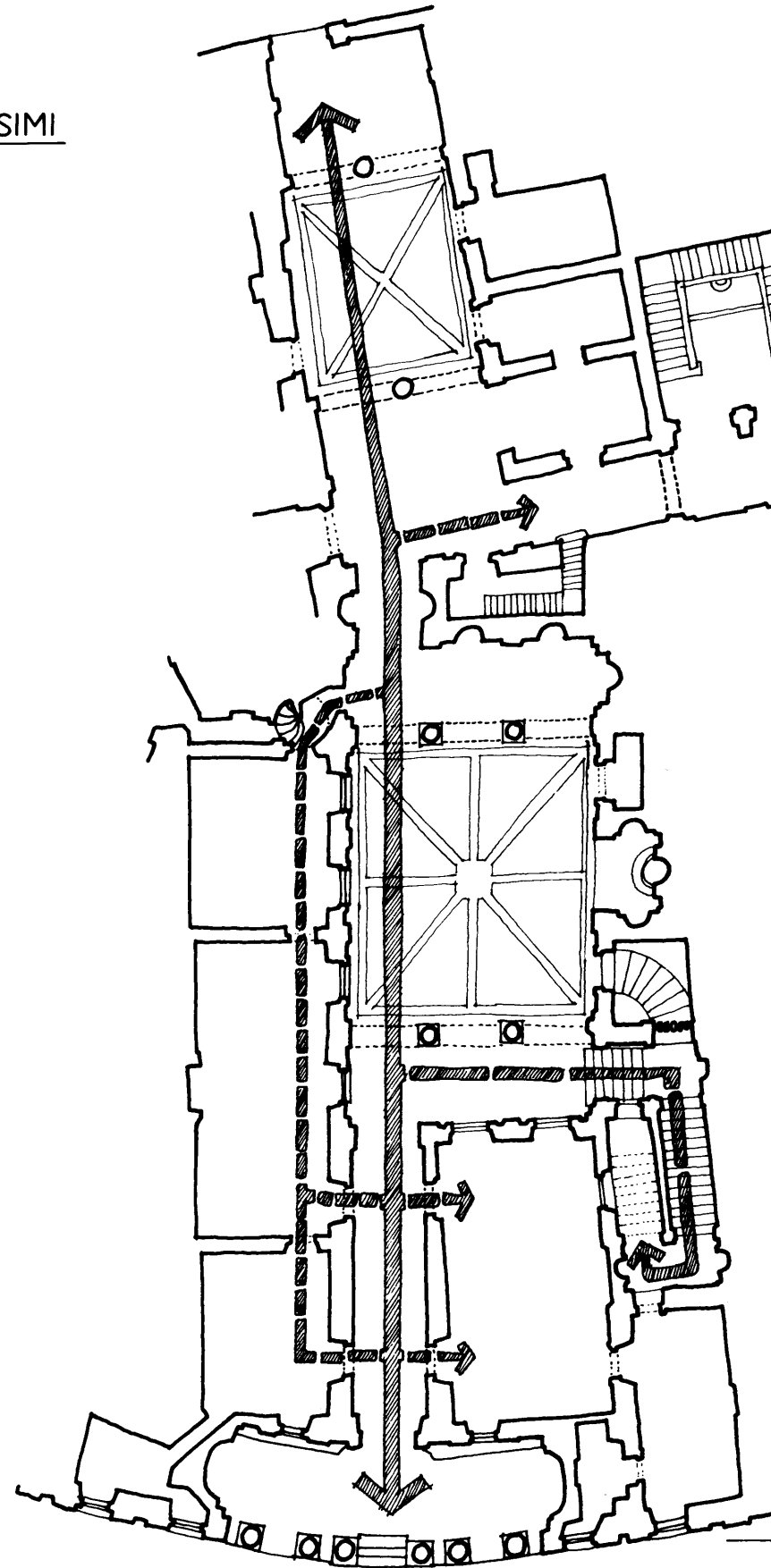
points are defined and enclosed, and the scale and interrelationship of shared spaces may be conceived so as to create decision-making possibilities for the dweller.

The palazzi of Renaissance Italy and the country inns of colonial America share, in principle, the idea of using dual patterns of circulation within the realm of shared space in order to create choices. Each of these references employs one primary and one secondary system of movement between individual rooms. The result is that no single space is dependent solely on one path pattern for accessibility and interrelatedness to other spaces. An individual in any given place may either move into the primary path system, or into a secondary path-place system depending upon a personal decision.

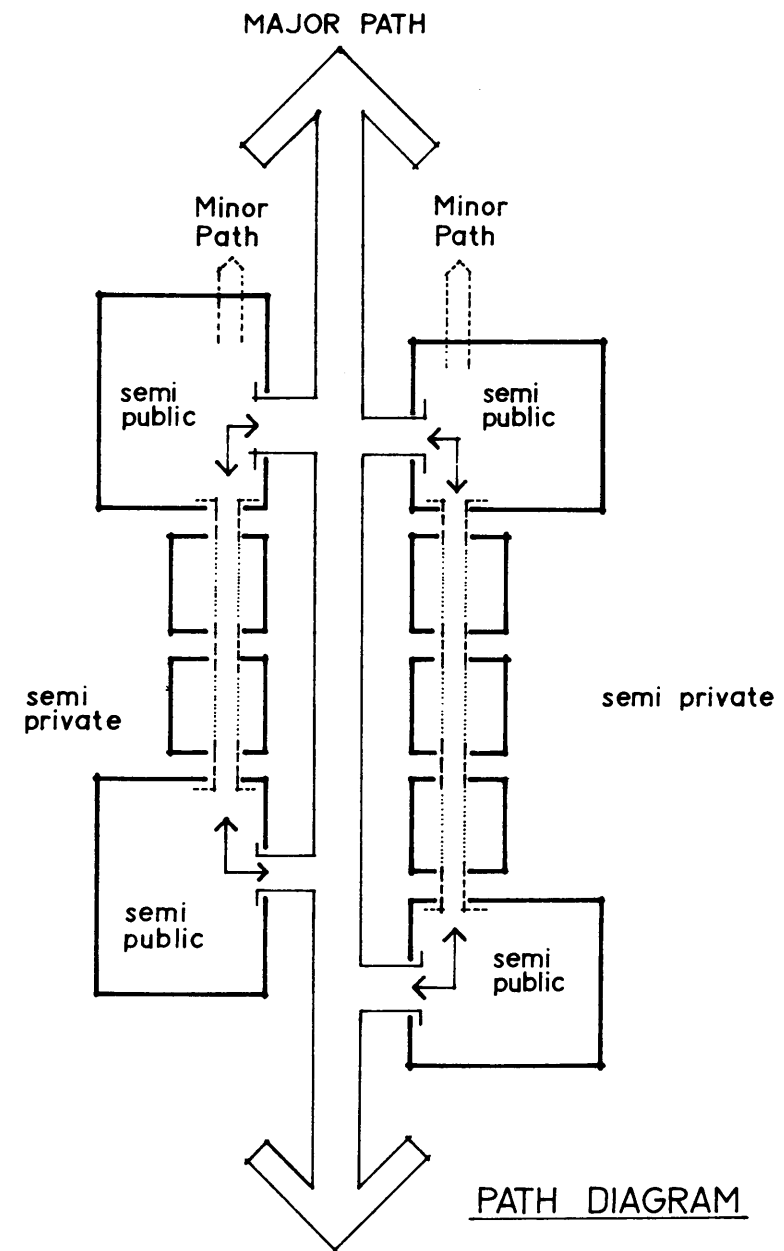
The Palazzo Massimi (see p. 43) embodies the path and place dwelling patterns typical for its time and culture. The Renaissance palace was a place of lavish display and entertainment. It served as dwelling place for aristocratic families, servants, guests, and kinsmen. Thus a complex and rich social order required a commensurate organization of the home-place.

Of the period's social setting, Talbot Hamlin wrote, "For such a life as this, these great palaces were the only suitable frame. Into their capacious courts rode lord after lord, their torch-bearing outriders ahead, to dismount gaily at the foot of a wide stair. In the great halls tables piled with food and superb silver and gold and jeweled bowls

FORMAL
REFERENCE
PALAZZO MASSIMI

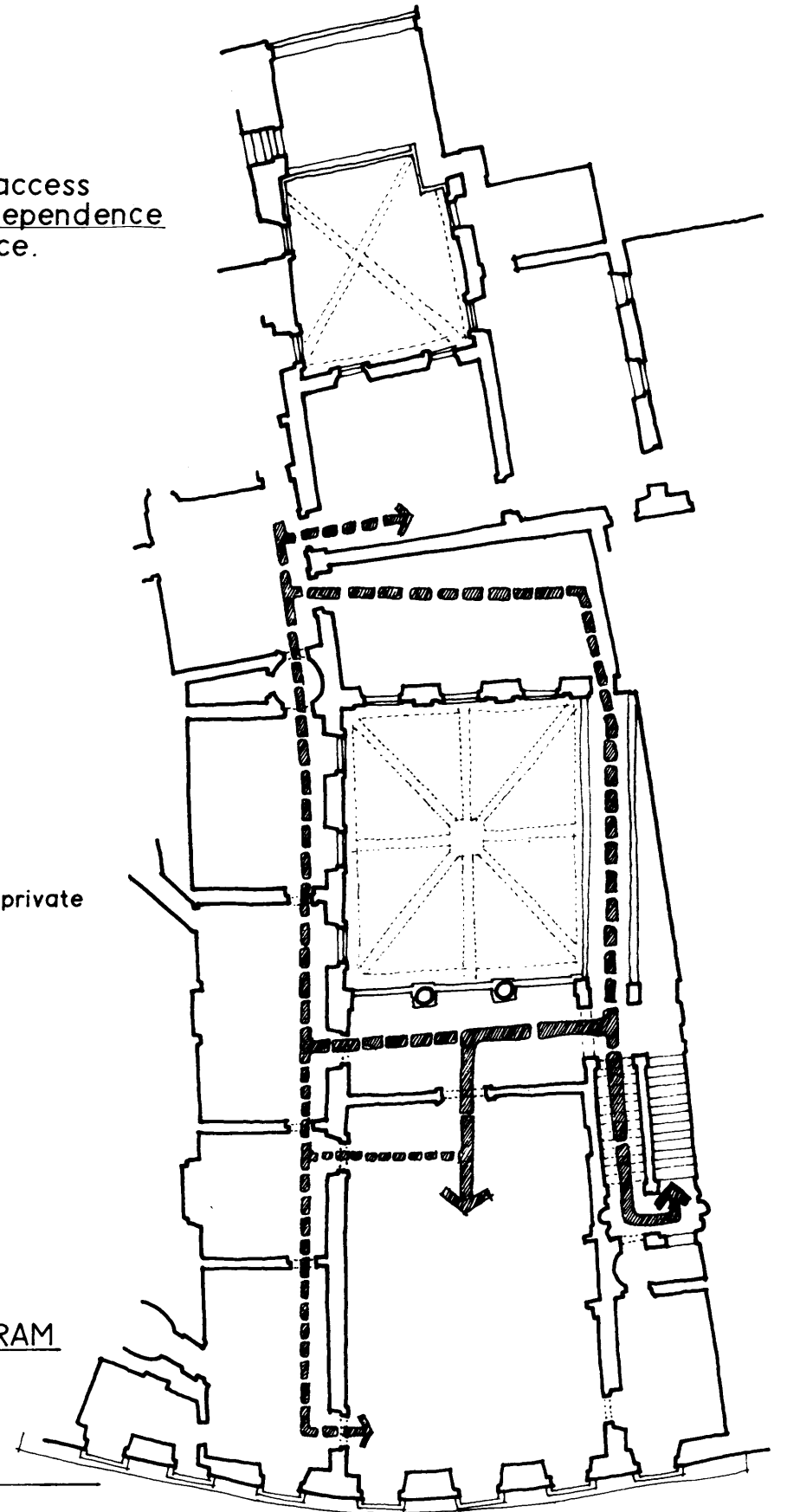


Multiple path systems and multiple access points to each space allow for independence through choice of spatial experience.



GROUND FLOOR

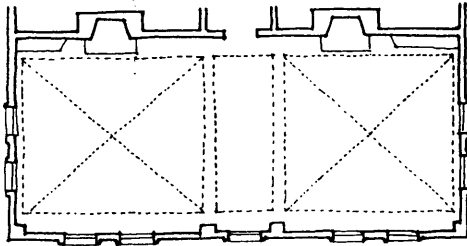
PIANO NOBILE



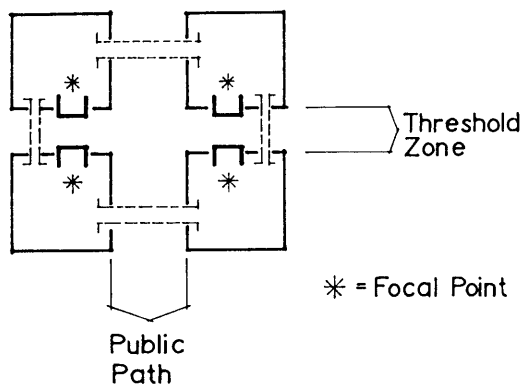
and dishes... lay open to the multitude of guests, and pages... stepped busily back and forth with pitchers and decanters of wines.... In the shadowed loggias, where the evening breeze swept in, or in the upper arcades of the great court, were abundant spaces for those who sought companionship more close, hidden from the public throng."

The Palazzo Massimi was organized at the ground floor by a major internal pathway which linked a major public way at the front entrance to a service-like public street at the rear. This path consisted of loggias, vestibules, and courtyards which spatially united the ground floor with the piano nobile above. Along this path were access points, doorways, into semi-public chambers. The semi-public chambers were connected by common access points to more intimate, semi-private chambers. The semi-private realm was not directly accessible from the major path. The arrangement of this series of chambers into a suite created a minor path system which permitted any place within the domestic realm to be reached by either of two means, via the more public major path system, or through the more intimate chamber-by-chamber path. It is particularly significant that the palazzo offered two path systems of divergent scale and spatial qualities. One was far more introverted than the other.

The country inns of colonial America (see p.45-46), though smaller and more simple than Italy's grand palazzi, nevertheless were the setting for rich communal socializing.



BALLROOM 16 x 36
(SECOND FLOOR PLAN A)

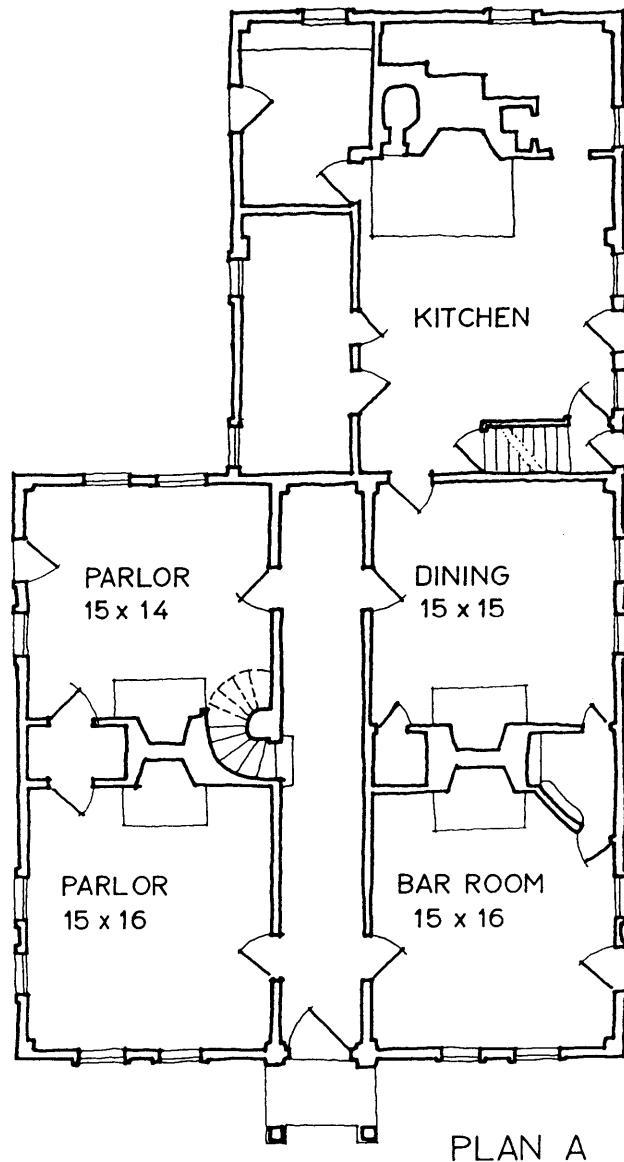


Order is created through dimensional repetition and consonant deployment of focal points and accessways.

Choice is created by means of redundant spatial usage and multiple accessways.

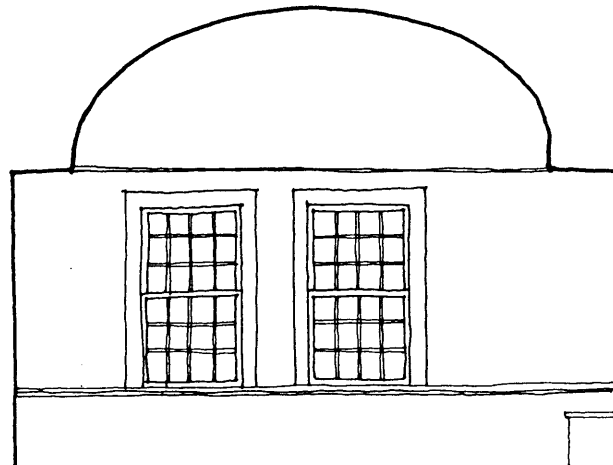
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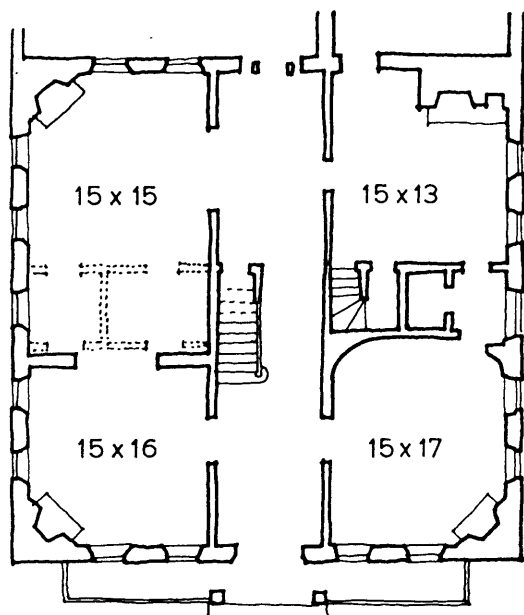
COLONIAL COUNTRY INNS



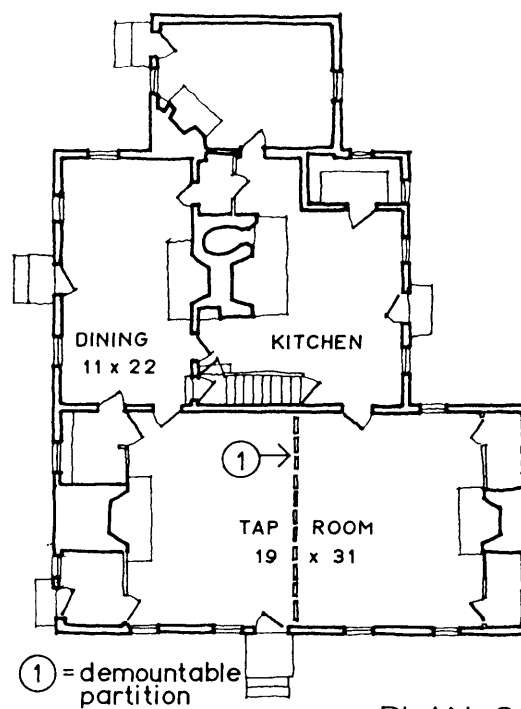
BALLROOM SECTION (Plan A)

Territories within the open ballroom which are dimensionally consistent with the ground floor social spaces were created through variation of the ceiling plane commensurate with the location of fireplace focal points.





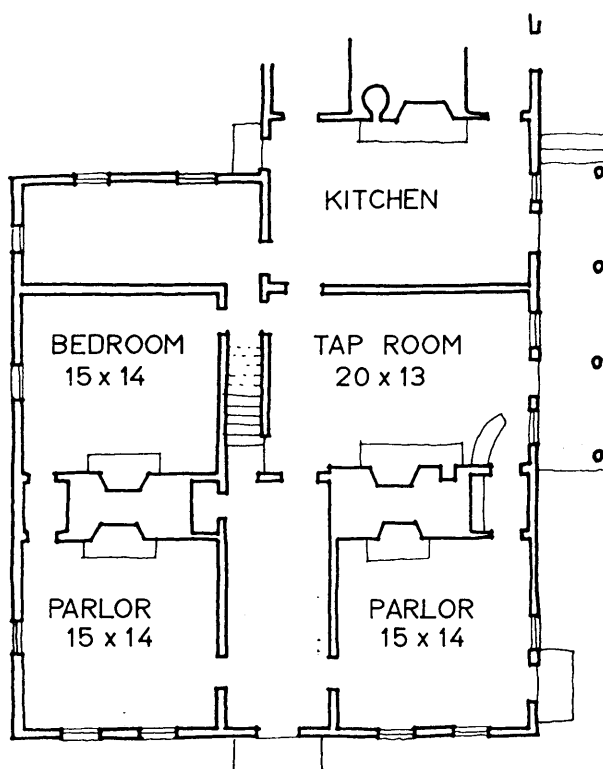
PLAN B



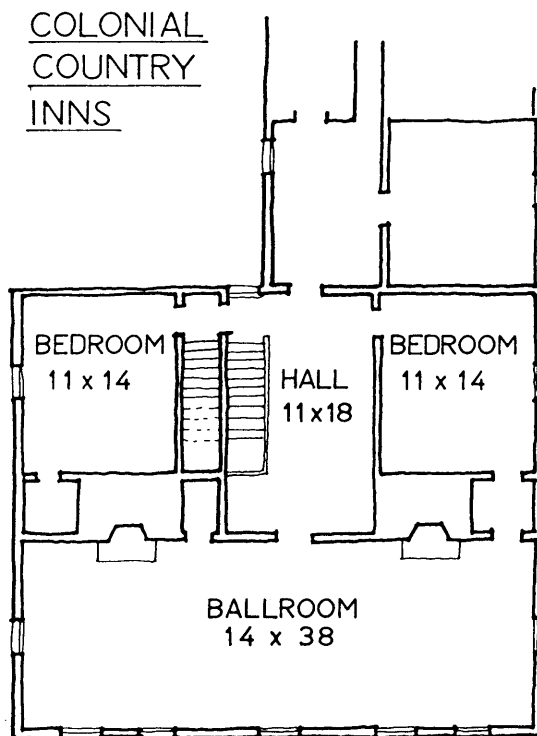
PLAN C

FORMAL REFERENCES

COLONIAL
COUNTRY
INNS



PLAN D-1



PLAN D-2

Marian D. Terry has described the country inn in this way:

"To the colonists of early days an inn was far more than a place which provided drink and relaxation; it was the center of community life. Court meetings were held at inns; official information was distributed to them for circulation, and bulletins concerning important events were pinned on the door. Built close to the Meetinghouse, the inn provided warmth and shelter between morning and afternoon services for those coming from a distance.

Altogether, the inn was the town's social and commercial center; it was the colonist's source of information, his shopping-place, his newspaper and his club. In addition to its local importance, an inn in each town to provide accommodation for travellers was essential for intercourse between the plantations and the conduct of the affairs of Government."

The circulation patterns of country inns were organized in a manner which loosely corresponds to that of the palazzi. In most examples there is a major path, a hall, which connects a number of rooms along it's path. These rooms in turn are connected to each other by small vestibules or doorways remotely located from the major path. Thus it was possible to move from room to room without travelling along the main hall. Further, many of the rooms were accessible directly from without, providing an additional accessway.

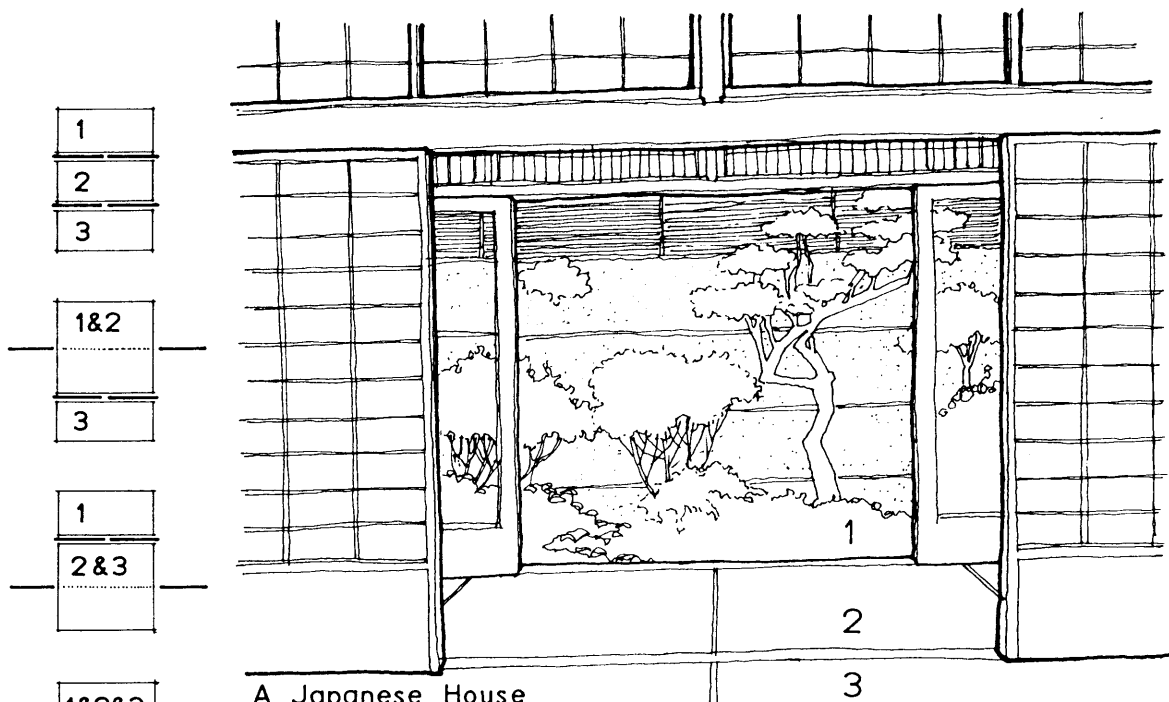
An essential characteristic of dwelling places which

have a communal character is a multiplicity of accessways and path systems. With such path organization comes the opportunity for choice, and with choice comes independence. A further benefit of a diversified path system is the environmental richness it offers in terms of varied physical and social settings.

The methods by which access points are defined has important implication regarding decision-making provisions for the dweller. The relationship between two spaces may be clearly established by the form, scale, transparency, and use of their common accessway. Two ways of dealing with accessways which provide a varying measure of choice are illustrated by an example of a traditional Japanese house and the Heurtly residence by F.L. Wright (p.49).

The Japanese house example utilizes pairs of sliding panels which the dweller may adjust in various combinations in order to integrate or segregate, in varying degrees, one space from another. The sliding screens are thin membranes which transmit light in different ways, becoming more transparent nearer the garden space in this case. Not only is accessibility affected by screen adjustment, but so to is the view and lighting level; and thereby the sense of spatial enclosure.

The Heurtly house example illustrates an accessway definition between two shared spaces of approximately equal communality. A very thick screen of glass doors and glazed display cabinets creates a setting for choices of a



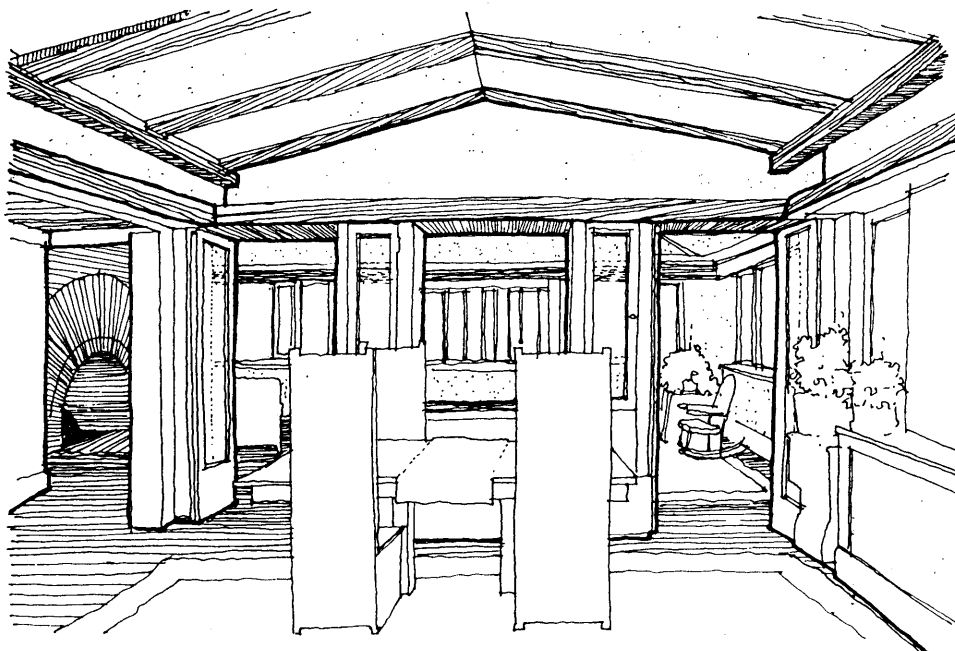
A Japanese House

The in-between space (2) is defined by two sliding screens, one translucent, the other transparent. The adjoining places may extend toward and into each other by manipulating the screens.

FORMAL REFERENCES

The in-between space is defined by a screen-like wall of wood-framed glass doors and built-in glazed cabinets.

The
Heurtley
Residence



different nature. The opening or closing of the glass doors on either side of the display cabinet affects circulation patterns, and to a lesser extent the spatial enclosure by making a denser screen when in the closed position. The glazed cabinets appear to be filigree-like columns framing a squarish void of display space. The positioning within these display spaces of art objects, flowers, memorabilia, or even further built screening will subtly influence the view, enclosure, and quality of light in each space.

The scale and use interrelationship of shared space as exemplified by the country inns of colonial America (p. 45 & 46) illustrate how place duality, like path duality, contribute to the creation of choice within the dwelling environment. The space of a typical inn was subdivided into four roughly equal compartments. The dimensional consistency when taken together with the pathway patterns created a very flexible or adaptable setting for various social exchanges. Each space was dimensionally related to the others, had similar access points, and usually an identical inwardly focused focal point (the fireplace). The major differences between these social spaces reside in their relation to utility spaces and, more importantly, to the outside world of light, breeze, and view. The opportunity to choose the use of a particular space ultimately resided with the innkeeper, who could create a number of use variations depending freely upon need (compare plan A with D-1 for example) rather than upon a particular

and unique spatial configuration. An example of the adaptability of the country inn's ballroom is described by Marian D. Terry:

"The construction of these rooms was accomplished in various ways, and in the early and simple form was not at all difficult or expensive. A partition between two bedrooms was provided with hinges and could be swung up and suspended by hooks in the ceiling. In the double room thus arranged, guests could dance through the evening. After their departure, the partition could be lowered, and furniture replaced, and family or overnight guests put to bed."

By creating a series of spatially related territories assembled along a major path which frequently had redundant usages (such as the parlors shown on plans A and D-1) a measure of choice was introduced regarding the utilization of space and the variety of social intercourse which could occur therein.

Though there is no example which illustrates all the points discussed, it is conceivable that the ordering of path, place, and the threshold could provide a home-place rich in opportunities for independence through choice.

Community and Privacy

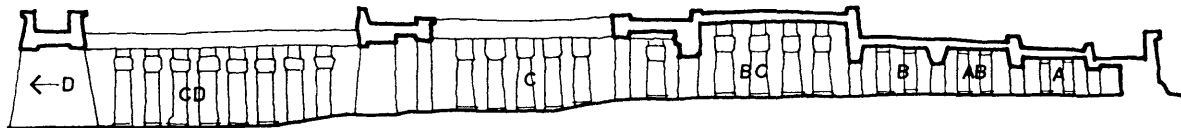
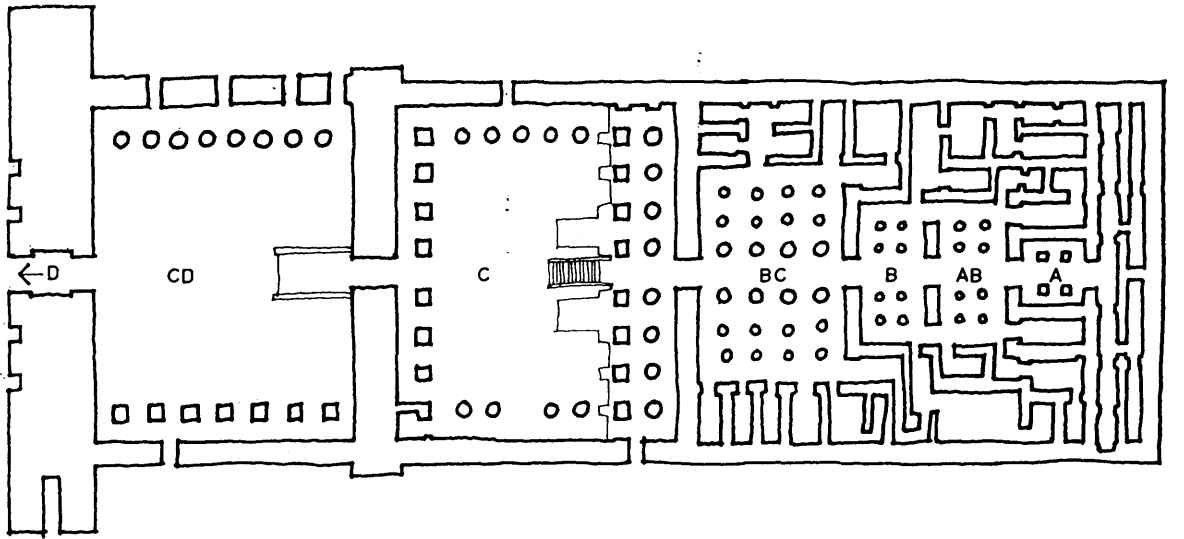
The congregate home-place intimately shelters both the communal realm and the personal realm. The nature of the relationship between the two realms transcends the dwelling environment however because the juxtaposition of the two

realms is experienced in a multitude of other social, educational, and spiritual settings. Individuals constantly pass between the realm of communal/collective interaction and the realm of personal introspection. Any setting which enhances the experience of the passage from "we" to "I" is worthy of consideration in formal terms as a reference for a congregate place.

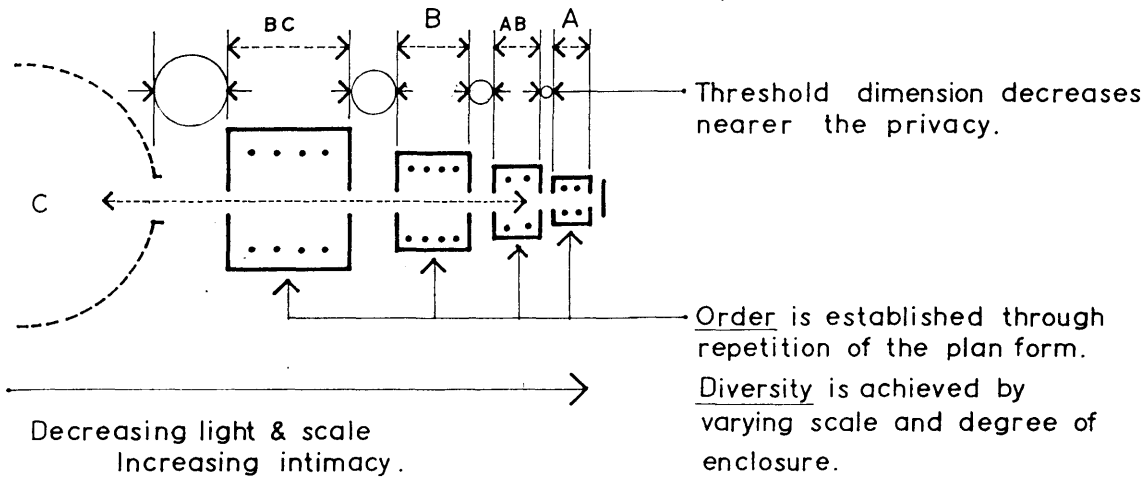
The formal references for spaces having both public and private realms vary from spiritual places of monumental scale, such as Hagia Sophia, to modest dwellings like the Trulli houses of Italy. Common to all, regardless of scale or use, is a spatial organization which clearly establishes in formal terms each of the realms, and with equal clarity relates them together by carefully conceived transitional, in-between places.

The passage from the world without to the one within varies greatly with the particular experience associated with each setting. The Temple of Medinet Habu (p. 53) creates an inner world of complete isolation, small, dark and mysterious. It does so by a layering of increasingly, introverted places along a gradually ascending path. Without the layering of intermediate places and preparatory in-between spaces, the ultimate privacy would not be achieved.

The thermal bath Teni-Kaplica (p. 54) seems to remove the individual from the world outside in only a partial way. The high blank walls transport the individual from ground



TEMPLE of MEDINET HABU
Egypt



A = the inner place

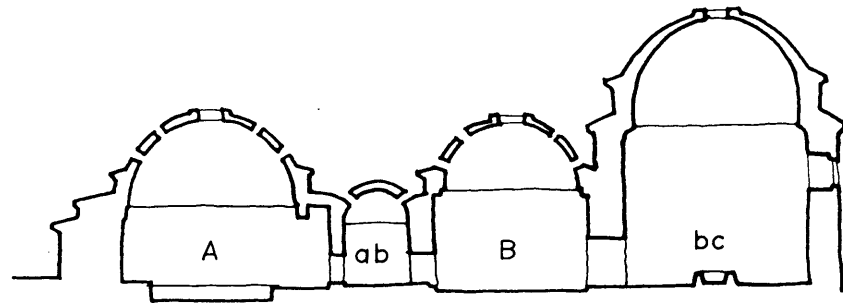
B = the intermediate place

C = the outer place

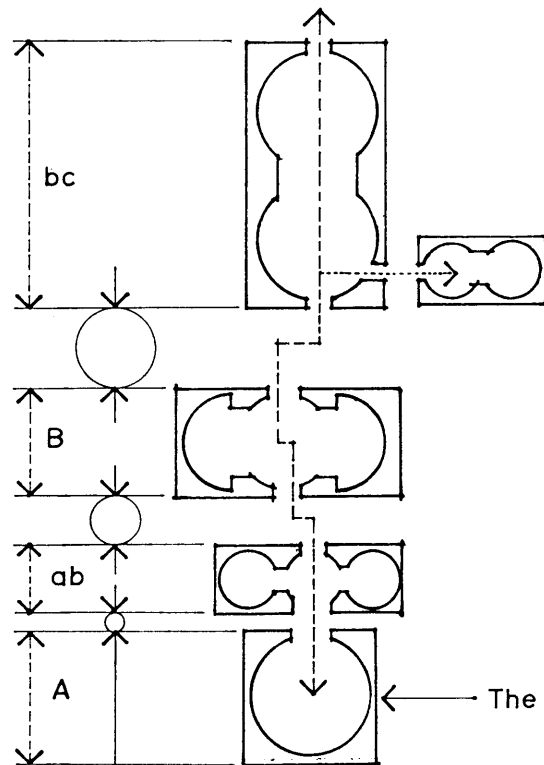
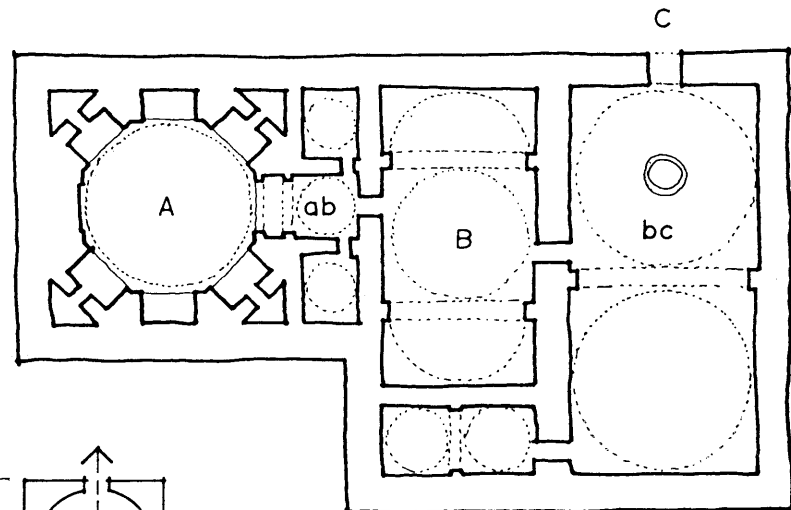
BC & AB = in-between spaces which have characteristics of the two adjoining places.

FORMAL REFERENCES

YENI KAPLICA
(thermal bath)
Bursa, Turkey



A = the inner place
B = the intermediate place
C = the outer place
ab & bc = in-between transitional space



The basic building block is square in plan with a sky-lighted dome above which is transformed into a diverse range of spaces: doubling, tripling, or halving them in concert with scale changes. The repetition of the building block relates the spaces together. The variation of block assemblage gives each space an individual character.

Threshold dimension decreases nearer the inner world.

FORMAL REFERENCES

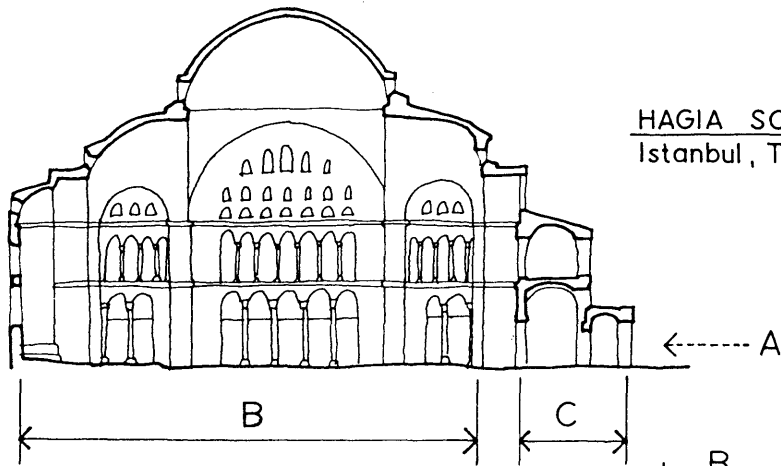
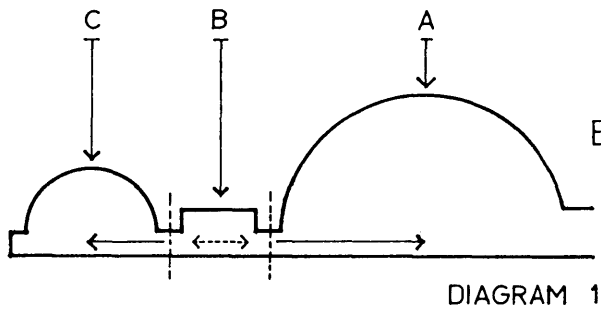
related activities while the skylighted domes bring in light and color from a world above. This place does not isolate the individual from the larger community, but transforms the community within a related inner-world. The number of intermediate spaces and in-betweens are fewer than with the Egyptian temple, and it further contrasts the spiritual place in that it culminates in an expansive place rather than a constrictive place.

In a similar way Hagia Sophia and SS. Serguis and Bacchus (p. 56) transforms the outer community into a special inward one. A thick belt of screen-like space encompasses the central domed space. There is a world of reduced scale and light in-between the openness without and the skylighted world within. The screen-like space between is capable of becoming part of the space within, or standing alone as a unique and spatially legible place.

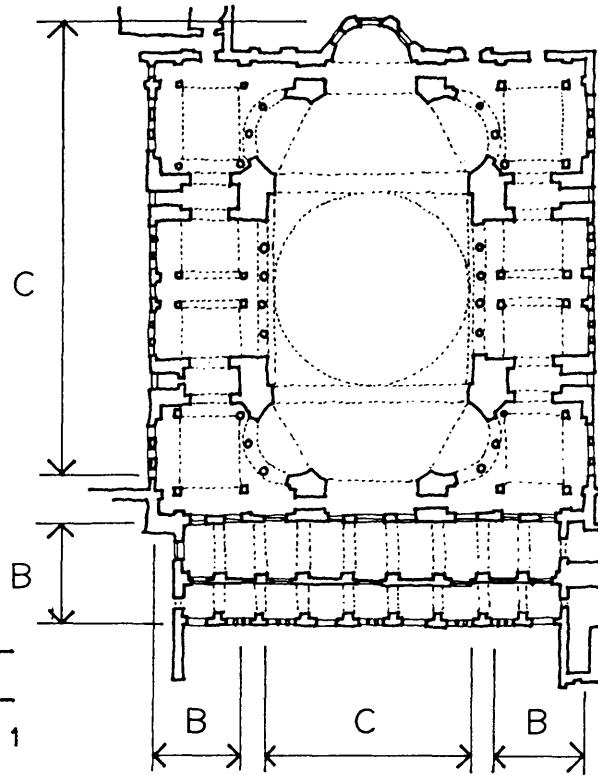
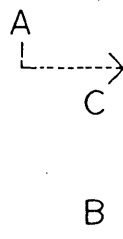
FORMAL REFERENCES

The inner space of the sharing community is separated from the outer world by a screen-like edge/threshold space.

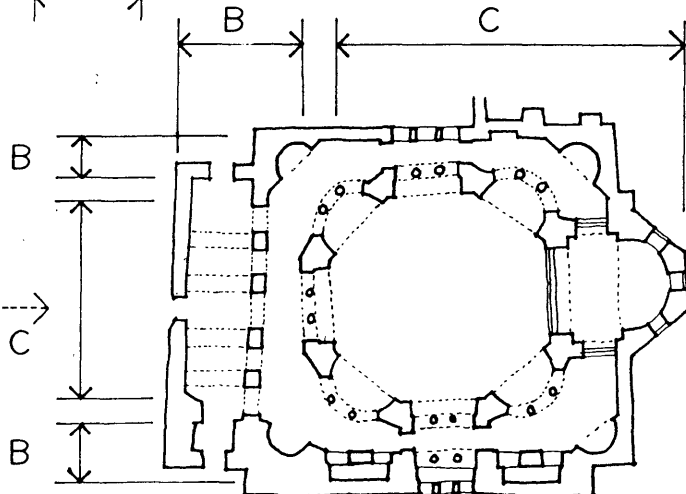
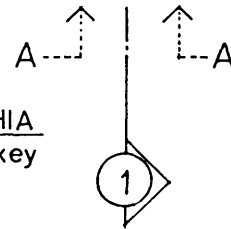
The Anonymous Community (A)
 The In Between Space (B)
 The Sharing Community (C)



SS. Sergius and Bacchus
 Istanbul, Turkey



HAGIA SOPHIA
 Istanbul, Turkey



Thus the two early Christian churches seem to offer an alternative in-between spatial definition, one that is lucid and capable of extending toward and interacting with the adjoining space.

The Trulli houses of Italy (p. 58) are equally clear in defining public and private realms by means of varied ceiling form, scale, and threshold dimensions. Nearer the public realm the thresholds thicken and the semi-public space is domed and tall. Inward toward the private realm the dome form repeats, though smaller, and threshold dimensions narrow. Smallest of all, and with little or no threshold, is the private realm.

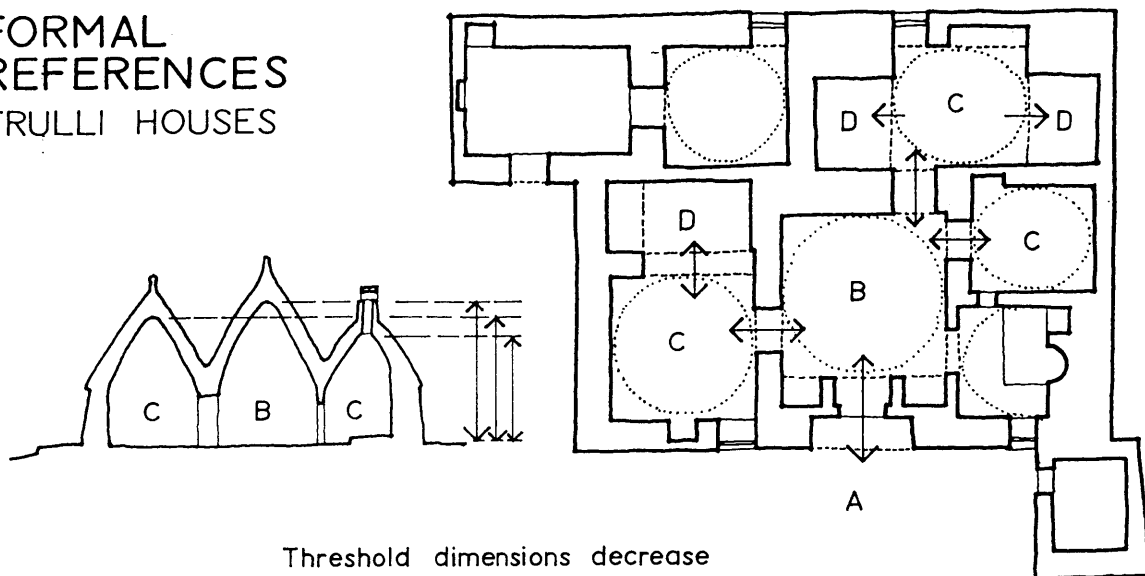
Two examples from the residential work of Frank Lloyd Wright illustrate further other ways in which in-between spaces can be given form consistent with their public/private relationships (p. 59).

It is clear that in order to provide the private realm with it's own integrity (in relation to the public) a series of in-between places are necessary. The form of these in-betweens will mitigate the formal differences between the two realms, thereby relating them together and establishing their own in-between identity.

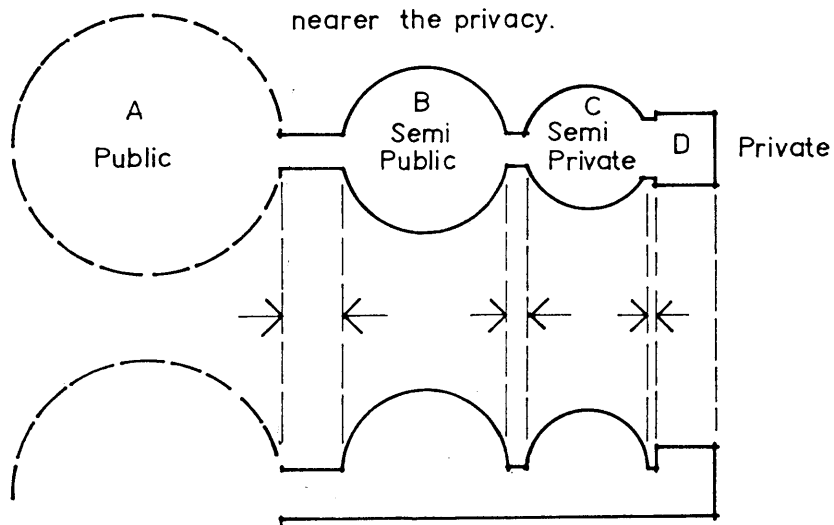
Order and Diversity

The need for order and diversity within a dwelling environment in order to make it legible and rich in mystery and surprise is clear. Many examples exist of buildings

FORMAL REFERENCES TRULLI HOUSES

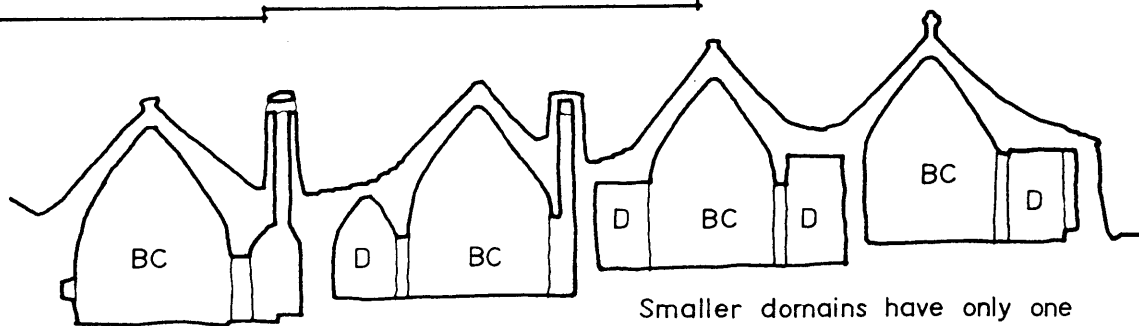


Threshold dimensions decrease
nearer the privacy.

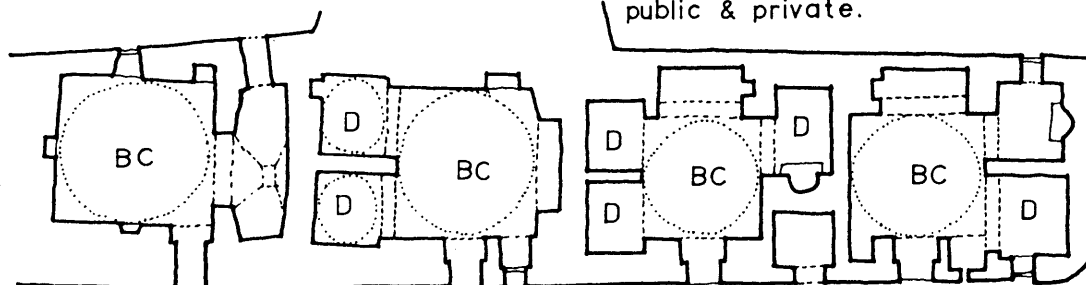


Access points
increase nearer
the public.

Intermediate spaces
B & C are related by
common form but
distinguished by
differing scale
(diminution nearer
the privacy).

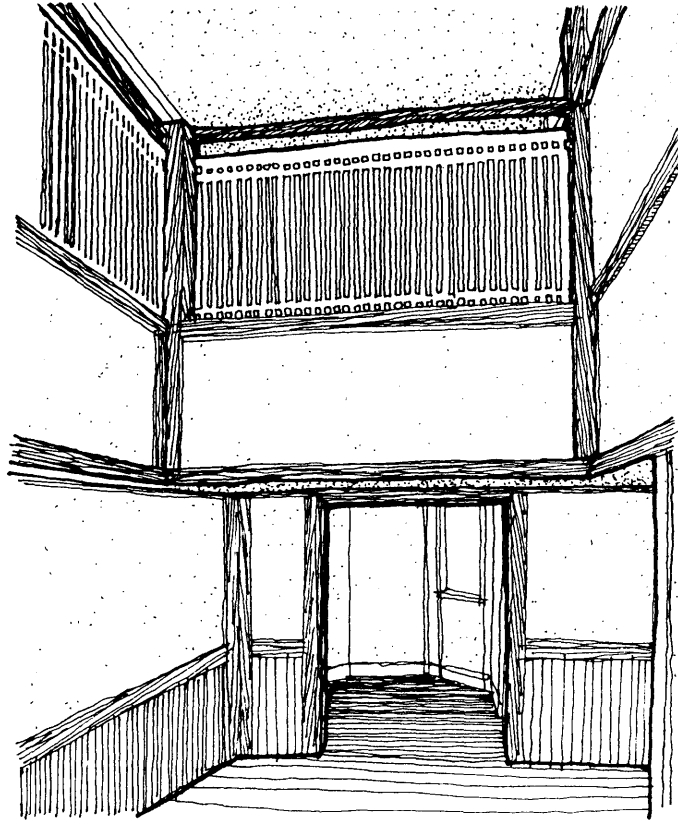
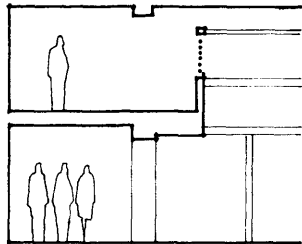


Smaller domains have only one
intermediate space between
public & private.



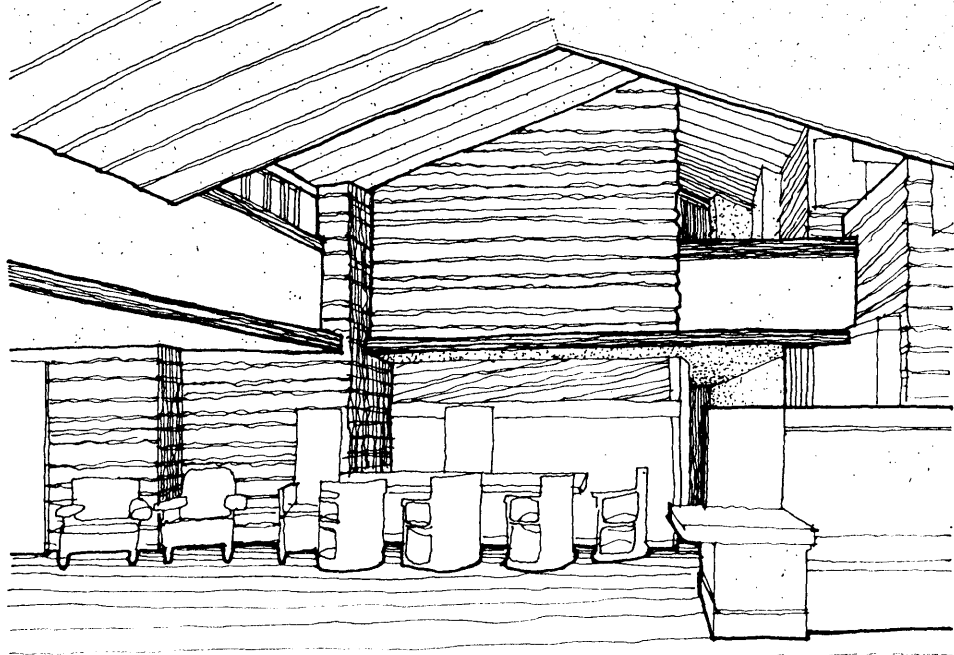
FORMAL REFERENCES

This vertically continuous space joins public and private realms. The space narrows vertically and is defined by a dense wood screen nearer the private realm.



Two dwellings by Frank Lloyd Wright

Territories within this horizontally continuous space are defined by varying vertical dimensions and ceiling planes.



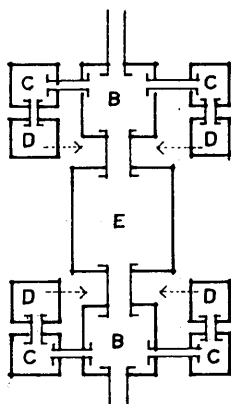
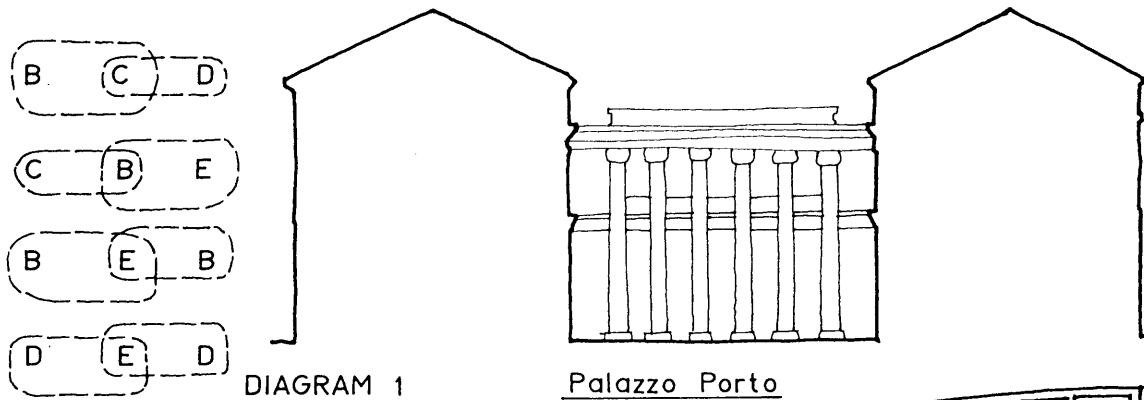
which make ordered and exciting environments in different ways with equal success. Each example relies upon repetition of some architectural or environmental element to establish order and employs scale, orientation, or spatial enclosure variations in order to provide diversity.

The country inns of colonial America (p. 45-46) employed dimensional repetition in order to relate spaces together (such as parlors and dining rooms) and dimensional variation in order to create special places (such as those of an upper level ballroom).

The "House of the Faun" at Pompeii (p. 61) is ordered by the repetition an enclosed courtyard form. Variety comes about by modifying the scale, orientation, and column/screen density of each courtyard.

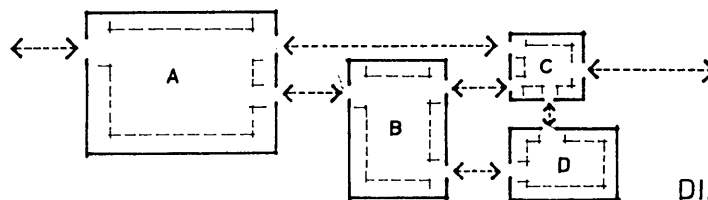
The temple at Medinet Habu (p 53) repeats the same chamber plan form six times, as well as maintaining a consistently symmetrical path relationship to each chamber. It's diversity comes from varying the scale, the density of screen-like columns, and the quality of light in each chamber.

What seems remarkable about each example is that with rather simple forms a rich and divergent range of spatial environments was realized. Inventive forms are not necessarily required in order to create diversity, and may, through their singularity, actually disrupt the legibility of a place.

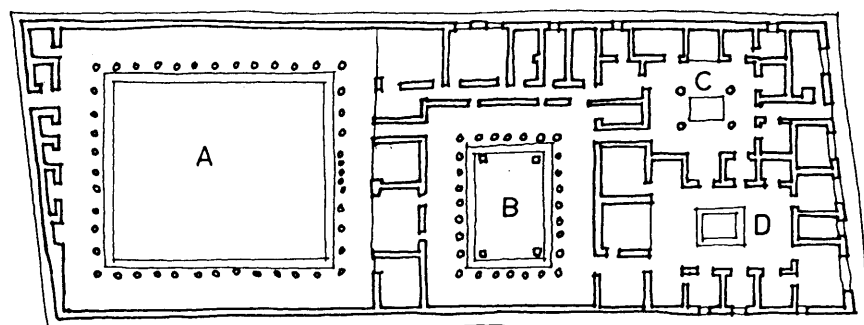


FORMAL REFERENCES

- Community & Privacy - private space is separated from public space by intermediate threshold spaces.
- Independence & Choice - there are two means of access between the path and the private realm.
- Order & Diversity - place continuity through repetition of enclosed courtyards, and variety through changes in courtyard scale and method of enclosure.



House of the Faun
Pompeii



A Design Proposal

Given the social context of congregate dwelling places and the programatic and formal references previously discussed, what kind of place might one create in a physical context radically different from those of the references? This design proposal adopted loosely the use-program of the Eldridge House at Hyannis while applying it to a densely urban context. Further, it attempts to distinguish community decision-making from individual decision-making in terms of building form. The initial proposal will illustrate an inhabited congregate place (p. 71 - p 81) and illustrate with diagrams (p. 82 - p. 86) its characteristics in terms of independence and choice, community and privacy, and order and diversity. The final proposal depicts a "pre-inhabited" environment; (p. 87 - p. 88) one which illustrates what might be community-derived decisions. The purpose in illustrating two proposals is to present a system of spatial organization capable of change and adaptation over time. It is reasonable to assume that the living patterns and management patterns (tenancy model) of a dwelling place will change, for example, residential places often change from single-family, or from rental properties to ones privately owned. It is not uncommon for housing to change function, to become a commercial or retail use-place. These types of use changes can all be seen, for example, in Boston's Back Bay. The proposed design attempts to address issues of elderly congregate living while simultaneously considering

issues of change and adaptation.

The program of this project called for a dwelling place capable of accommodating between twelve and twenty individuals in an area between ten thousand and twelve thousand square feet. Individual realms of about two hundred and seventy-five square feet each, containing some facilities of cooking and dining, were required. Private toilet rooms were also of necessity. In addition to the area requirements, variation in the spatial configuration of the private dwelling commensurate with Eldridge House (p. 33) were required. The community realm was to have spaces for conversation and other typical leisure activities, dining rooms, eat-in kitchen, bath/shower rooms, laundries, and outdoor leisure space. There was also need of a small administrative office.

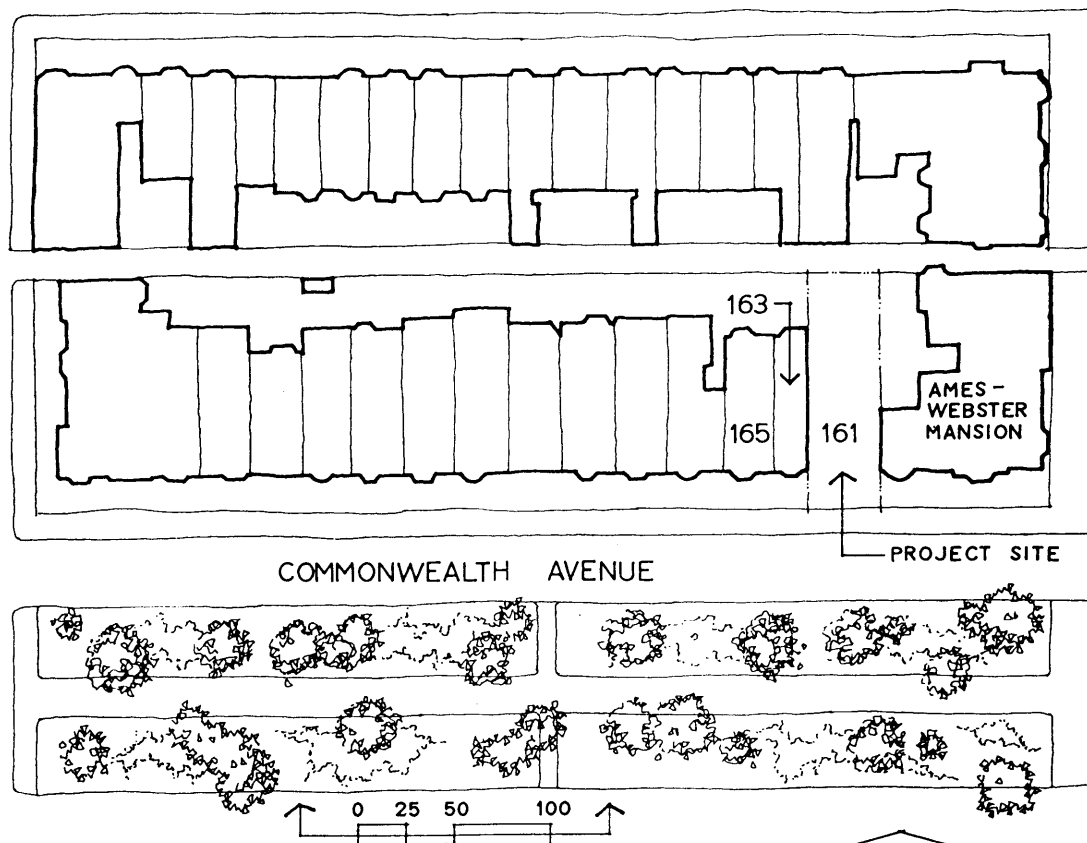
The need for clearly defined in-between spaces, like the internal shared "front porches" at Eldridge House were also a requirement, but one which demanded more extensive consideration of use than those uses given the fronts of Eldridge. Also as part of the program was the need for some built-in furnishings, particularly of a display nature. Many residents lose this sort of furniture prior to entering an elderly congregate setting, and therefore it seems a reasonable notion to respond to that need by offering substitute furnishings. Finally, some provision for the possibility of minor dwelling changes from one bedroom to two bedroom, or from shared congregate space to privately

owned space independent of the community setting was to be considered.

The site chosen for the exploration is number 161 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston's Back Bay (p. 65-67). A long narrow site, thirty-four feet wide and one-hundred twenty-four feet deep, with a twenty-four setback requirement at the front. The lot is bounded on the south by the park-like boulevard of Commonwealth Avenue and on the north by a public alley. To the west is a typical Back Bay townhouse and to the east the historically significant Ames-Webster Mansion.

The site offers a number of opportunities to create an environment rich in diversity of access, views, and activity. The southern views over Commonwealth Avenue provide a focus for the neighborhood's routine. The avenue also provides an easily accessible, safe, and richly detailed landscape for strolling. The adjoining lot northward is under-developed, accommodating a single level building which affords a view from the site of the sunny south facades of Marlborough Street. To the east is the multi-roofed Ames Mansion. The mansion does not fill its entire Commonwealth frontage from front to back, thereby affording an open court-like space from the public alley forward about seventy feet adjacent to the eastern boundary of the project site, providing the site with additional light, air, and roofscape views over the old mansion.

The architectural context of the neighborhood is that of elaborately designed stone and brick townhouses built



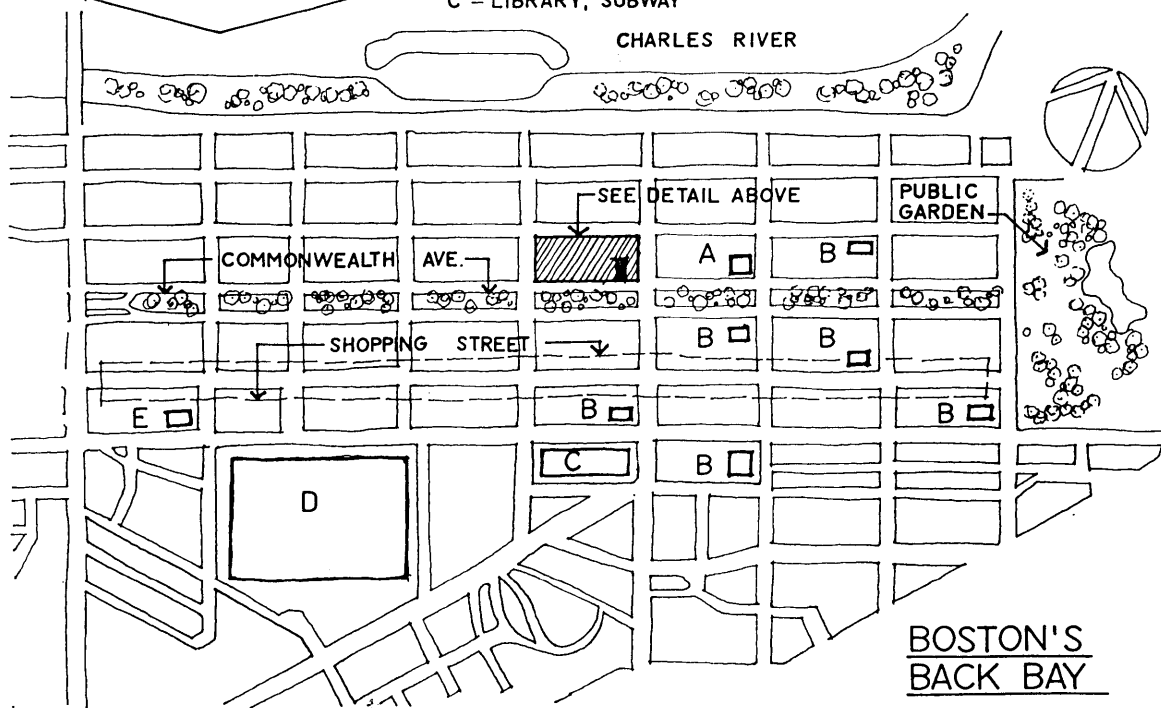
THE CONTEXT

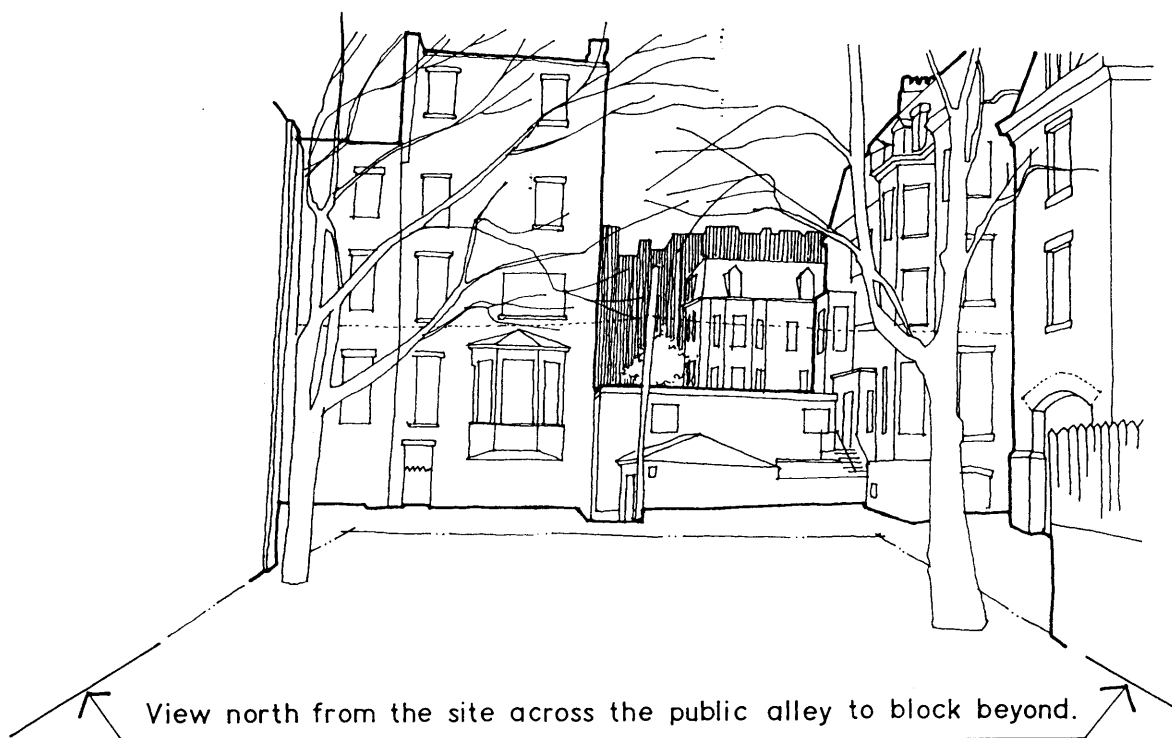
VICINITY DETAIL

VICINITY PLAN

A = PLAYGROUND
B = CHURCH
C = LIBRARY, SUBWAY

D = COMMERCIAL CENTER, SUBWAY
E = ART MUSEUM





THE CONTEXT

BOSTON'S BACK BAY

The site as seen from
Commonwealth Avenue..

THE CONTEXT

BOSTON'S BACK BAY



ADJACENT BUILDING WEST

◀ 165 Commonwealth Avenue
163 Commonwealth Avenue ▶



ADJACENT BUILDING EAST Ames-Webster Mansion

over one hundred years ago. These houses were the dwelling places of prosperous merchants and businessmen who lived in them with family and servants during the colder seasons. They had little or no outside space and were organized as largely private domains, although social interaction in the form of entertainment did take place within the home-place, they were for the most part introverted single-family dwellings. The formal organization of the facades of these buildings is extremely consistent throughout the neighborhood, making for a very legible urban environment. Each facade varies in detail, but adheres to basic principles of accessibility formal expressiveness, and use of materials. The proposal addressed contextual issues from the standpoint of trying to match existing conditions as much as possible in order to create an image of place which is compatible with an image of the traditional city home.

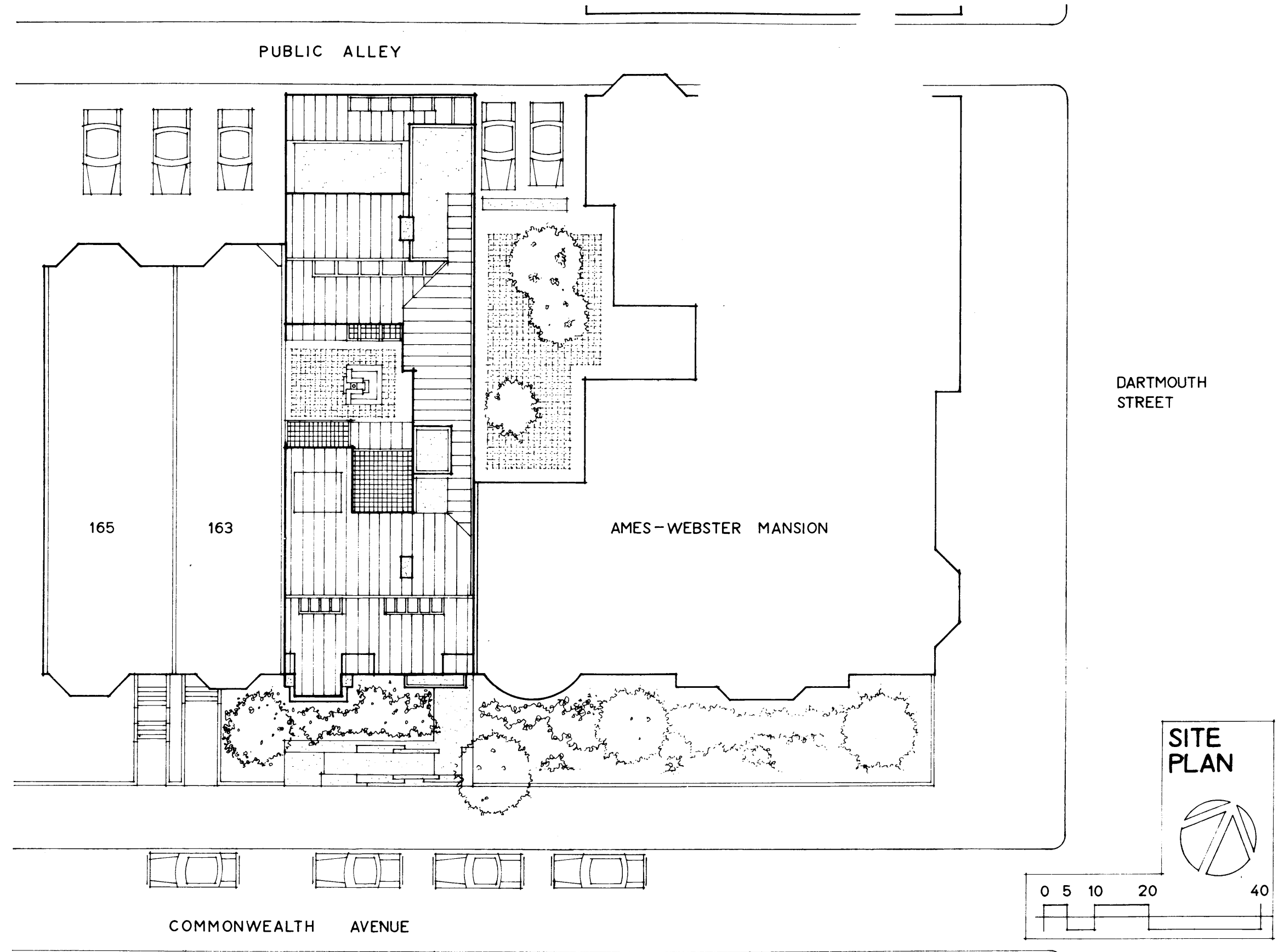
In order to clearly explain the proposed design ideas as they relate to independence and choice, community and privacy, and order and diversity, a series of diagrams were developed (p. 82 - 86). The value of the diagrams (as opposed to representational plans) lies in their power to convey planning principles clearly, divorced from the particulars of formal detail. Architectural principles may be represented in the built world in a multitude of ways. In evaluating an architectural principle through the study of something built, it is necessary to distill the idea from the method by which it was implemented. The formal

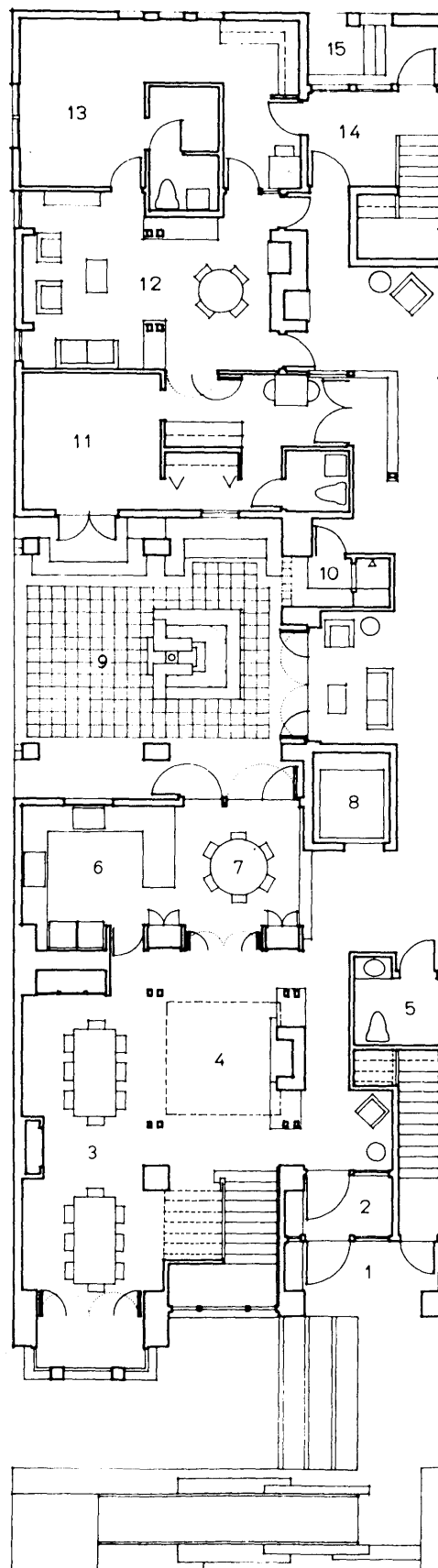
references which have been used to illustrate pertinent issues in this analysis are splendid examples of successful architectural implementation of time-proven planning principles. Other work that was planned using the identical principles may be less successful architecturally and therefore less cogent in representing the design ideas they attempt to embody.

The architectural principles which are depicted in diagram may be compared to the proposed design in order to evaluate how successfully the design gives form to the principle. The process of developing a diagram and testing it with representational drawings/models is the basis of an iterative process through which both diagram and representation evolve into progressively more clear and valid principles. The process of evaluation by means of a dialogue among the planning community (dwellers, housing authority, builders, lenders, and designers) is facilitated by the clarity and explicitness of the comparison of idea and its physical representation.

This thesis represents the first stage of an iterative process which would serve as the focus of a dialogue among individuals of divergent interests and expertise concerning the architectural aspects of shared residential places. The issues this thesis addresses and the architectural principles it illustrates are neither innovative or complex. At issue is whether or not these principles are helpful in deinstitutionalizing the elderly congregate environment and

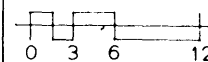
creating home-places which relate in a very direct and supportive way to the current living patterns (as well as the memories) of elderly dwellers.

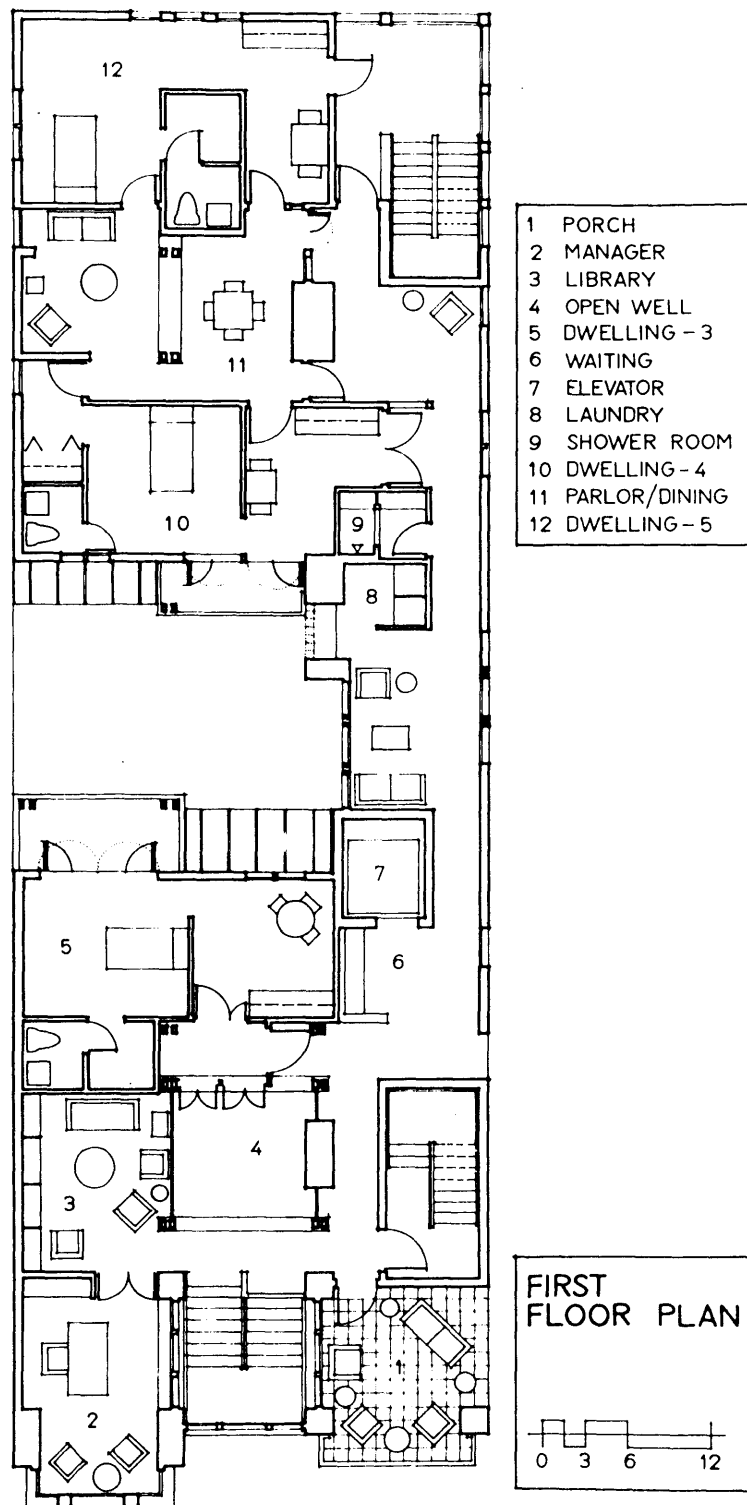


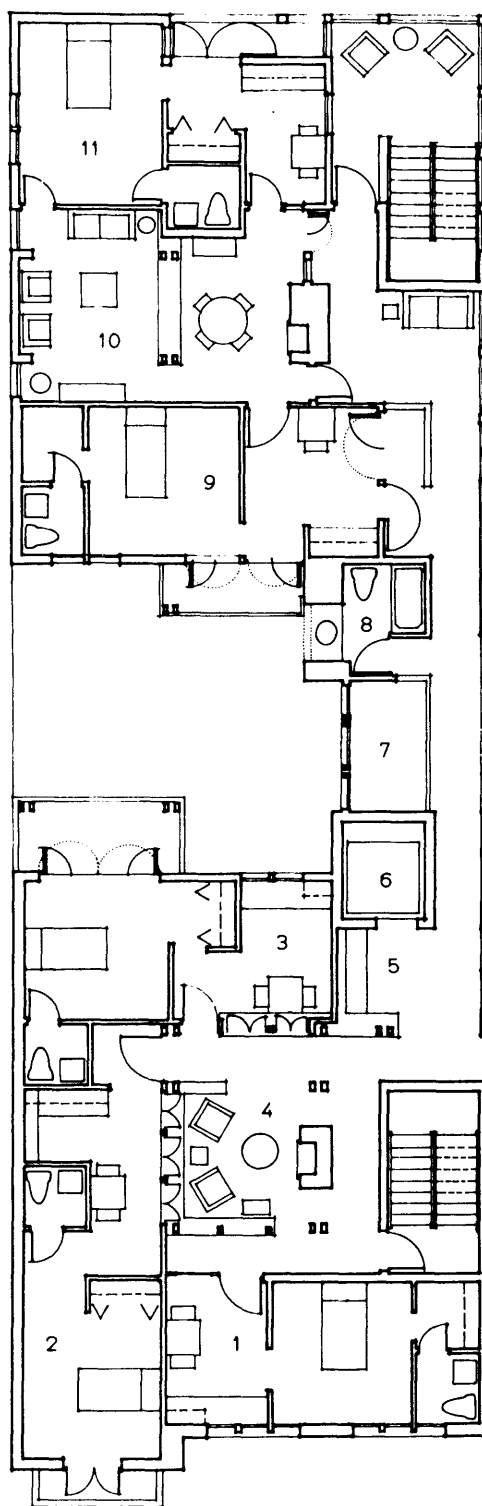


- 1 ENTRY
- 2 VESTIBULE
- 3 DININGROOM
- 4 HALL
- 5 PUBLIC TOILET
- 6 KITCHEN
- 7 BREAKFAST RM.
- 8 ELEVATOR
- 9 COURTYARD
- 10 SHOWER ROOM
- 11 DWELLING ONE
- 12 PARLOR/DINING
- 13 DWELLING TWO
- 14 VESTIBULE
- 15 ENTRY

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

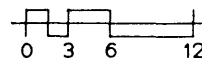


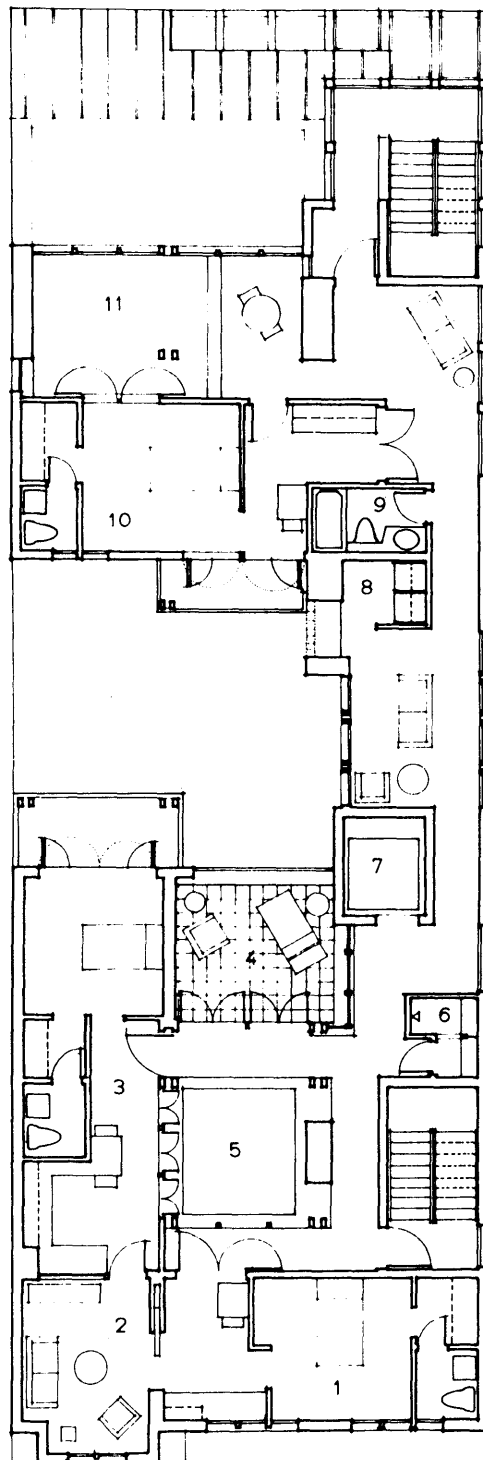




- 1 DWELLING -6
- 2 DWELLING -7
- 3 DWELLING -8
- 4 SITTING ROOM
- 5 WAITING
- 6 ELEVATOR
- 7 OPEN WELL
- 8 BATHROOM
- 9 DWELLING-9
- 10 PARLOR DINING
- 11 DWELLING -10

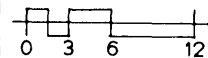
SECOND
FLOOR PLAN

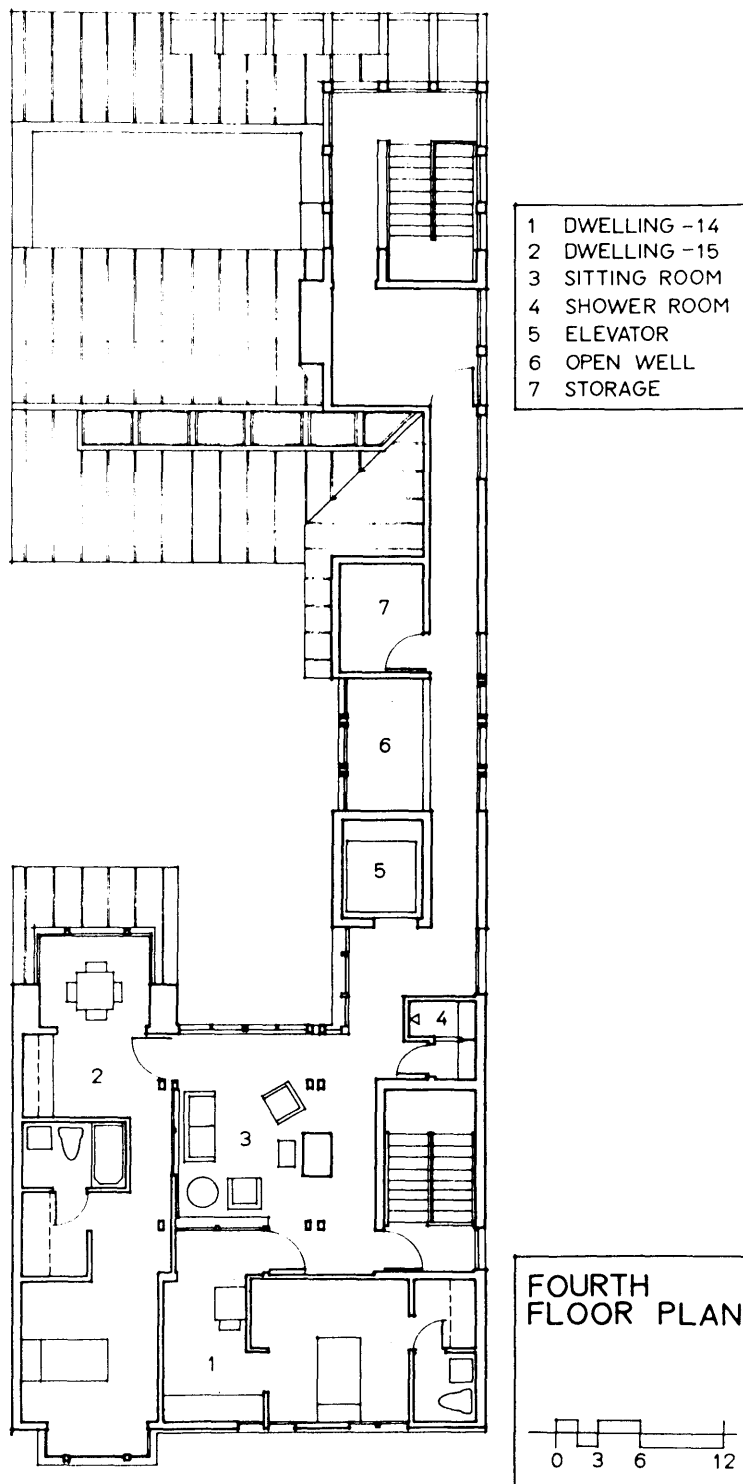




- 1 DWELLING-11
- 2 SITTING ROOM
- 3 DWELLING-12
- 4 ROOF TERRACE
- 5 OPEN WELL
- 6 SHOWER ROOM
- 7 ELEVATOR
- 8 LAUNDRY
- 9 BATHROOM
- 10 DWELLING-13
- 11 OPEN WELL

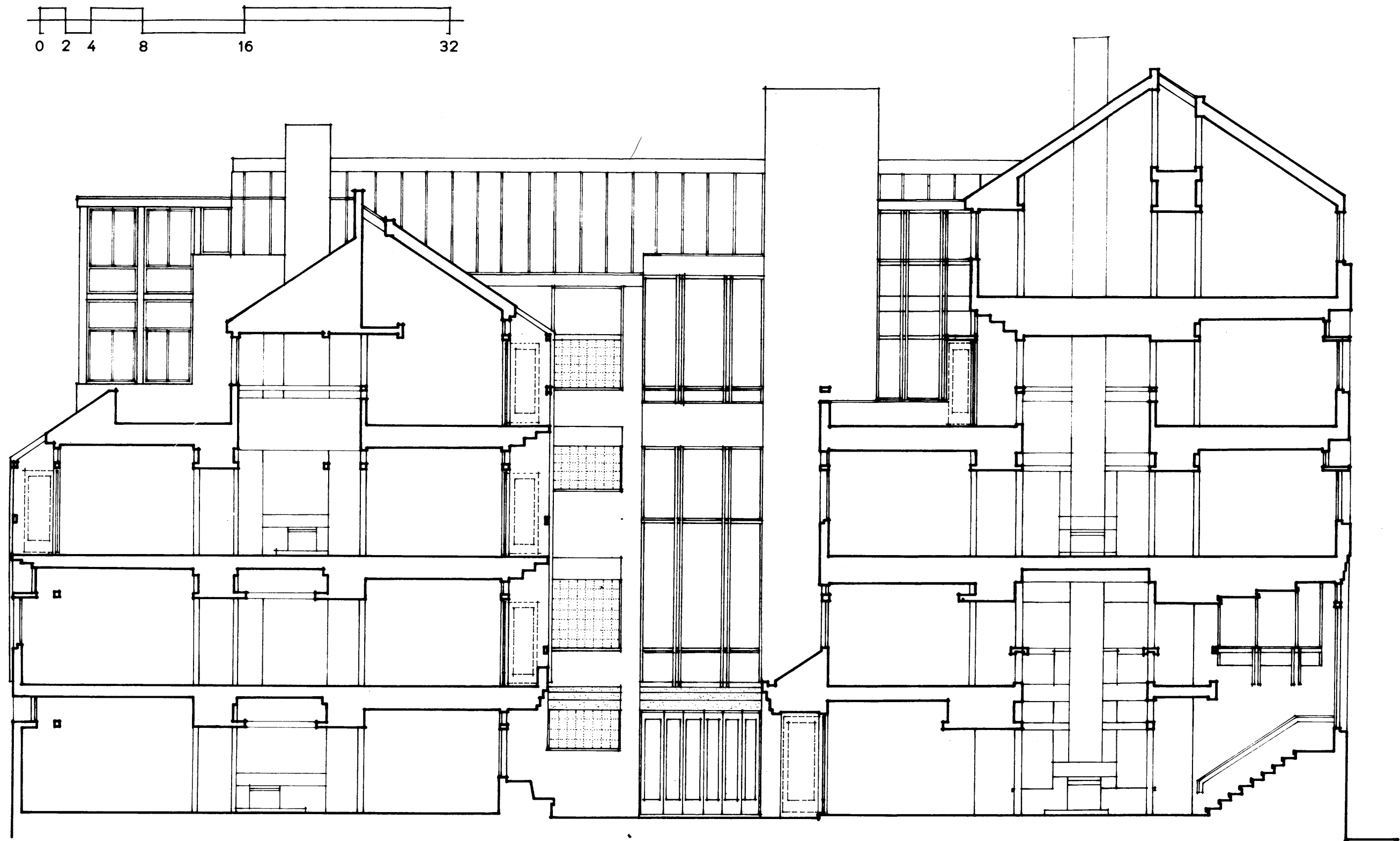
THIRD
FLOOR PLAN





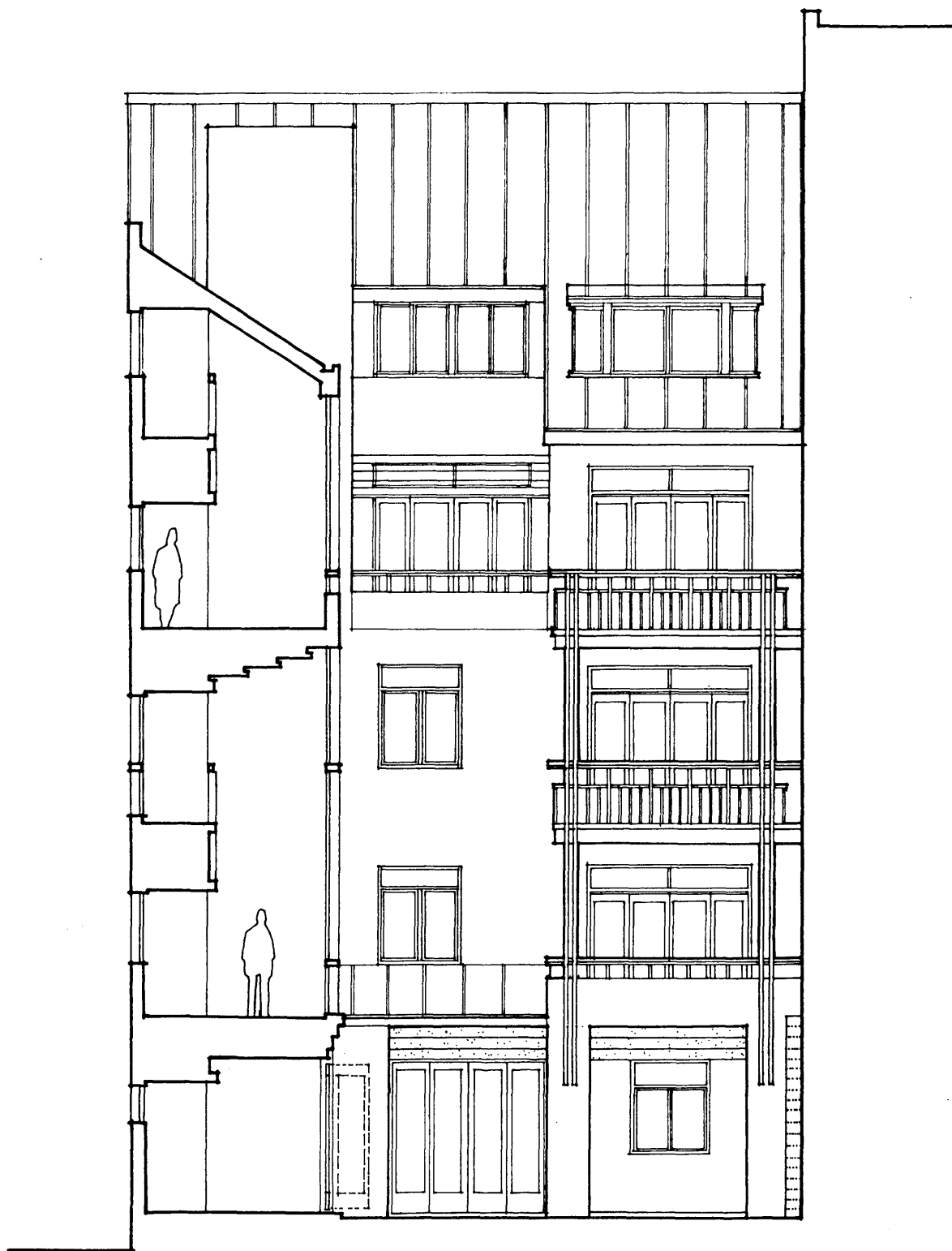
SOUTH ELEVATION

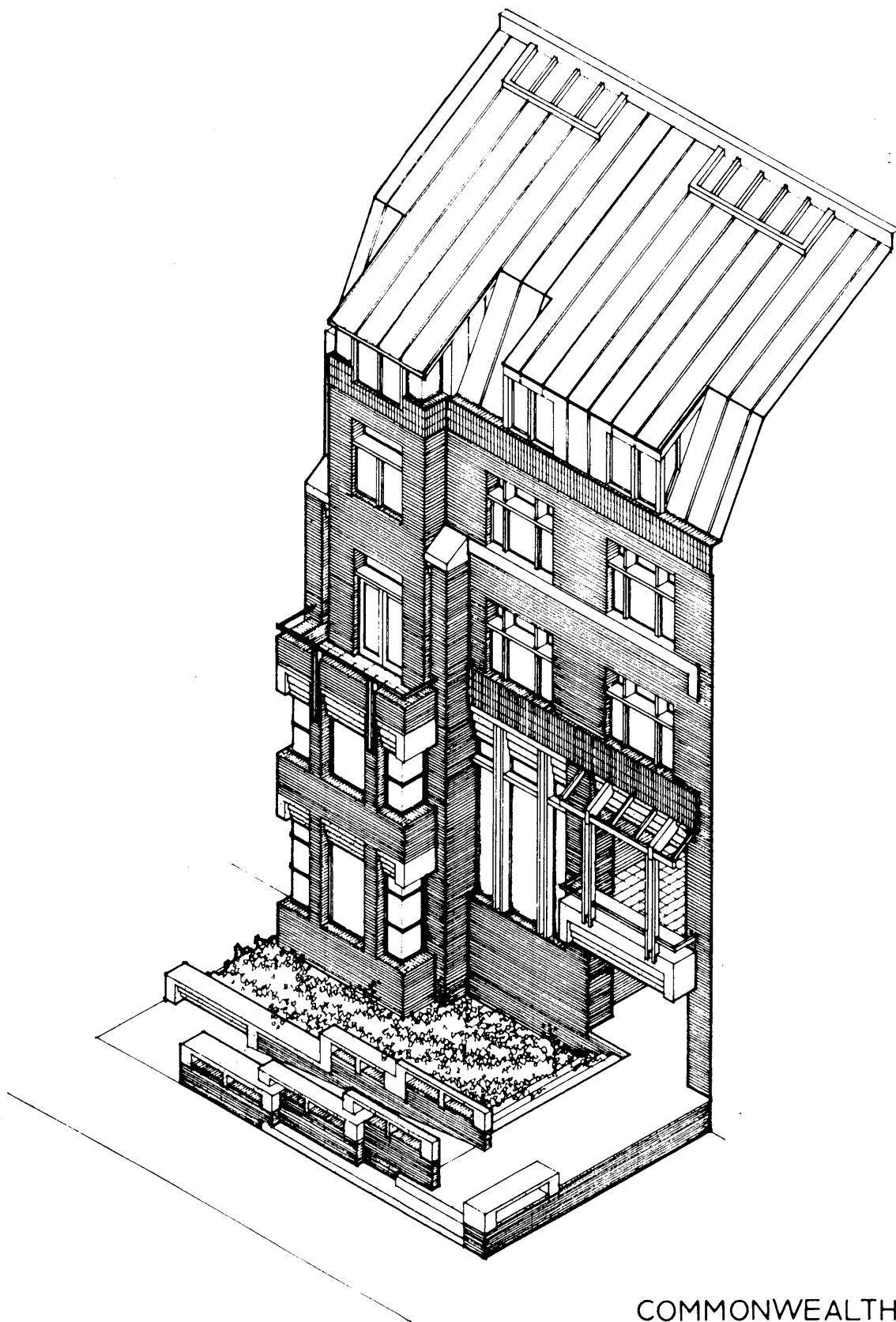




GENERAL SECTION

COURTYARD SECTION & ELEVATION

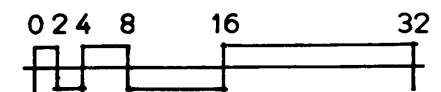


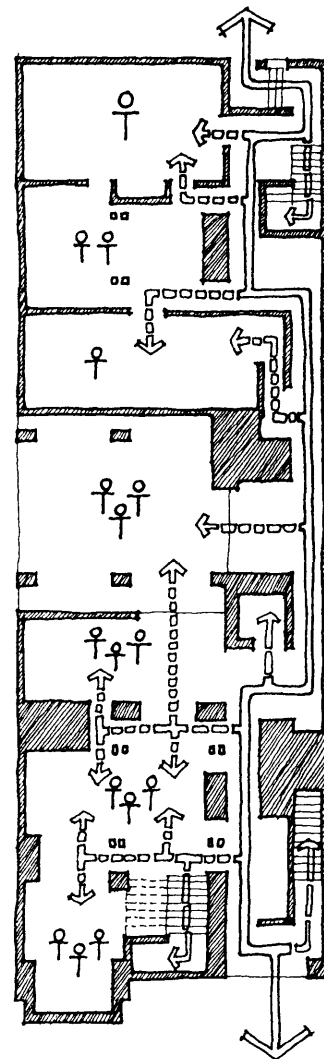
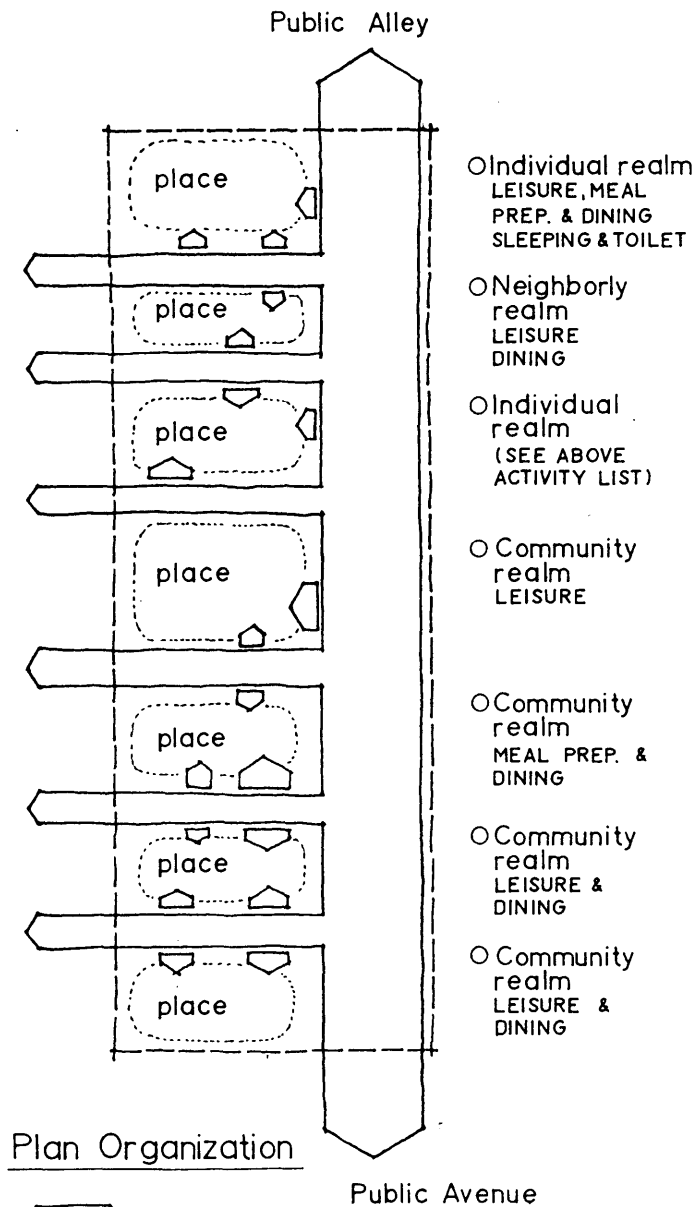


COMMONWEALTH
AVENUE FACADE

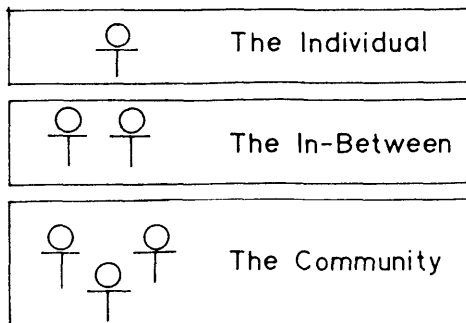


COMMONWEALTH AVENUE ELEVATIONS





- Choice of activity place.
- Choice of path and access.

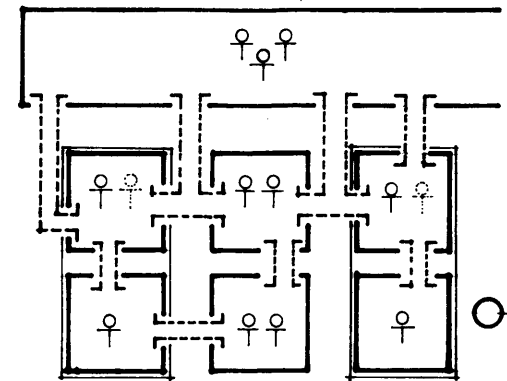
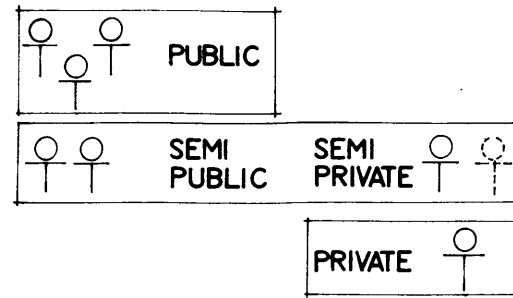


DESIGN DIAGRAMS

INDEPENDENCE & CHOICE

DESIGN DIAGRAMS INDEPENDENCE & CHOICE

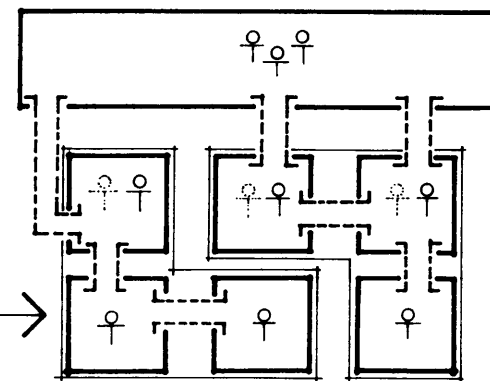
By providing places in between the public path and the private dwelling it is possible to provide multiple access points into the dwelling as well as a buffer between the individual and community realms. The dweller is thereby afforded a choice of path and of opportunity for social interaction. The minimal nature of the private domain requires an alternative to the individual's unit in order to create special views and unique amenities which are accessible to any dweller without being compulsory.



Original Inhabitation

Adapted Inhabitation

Changing Needs over Time

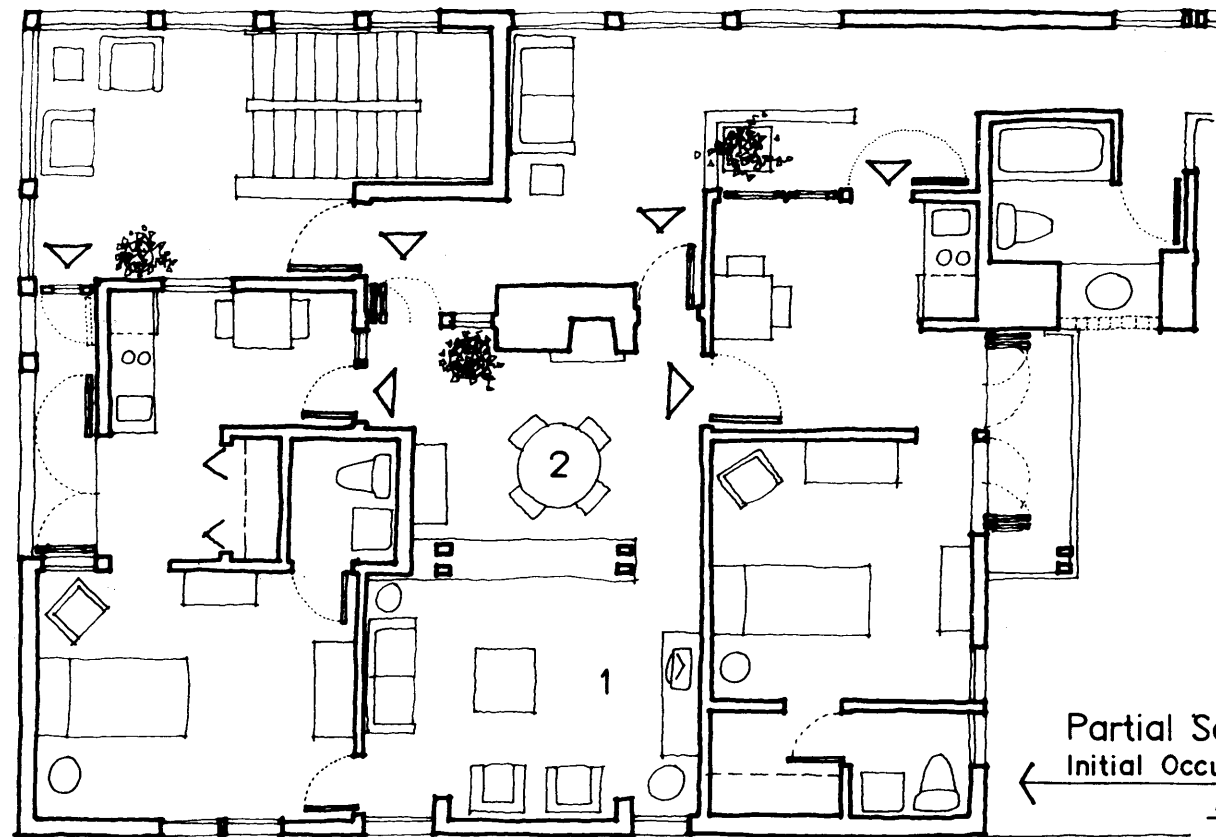


Plan Organization

Scenario A: initially, these spaces are occupied by two dwellers who share a common sitting room which can accommodate overnight guests on a sofa-bed (1). They also share a common dining area which is used for entertaining visiting family or for small group activities among dwellers (2).

Plan Organization

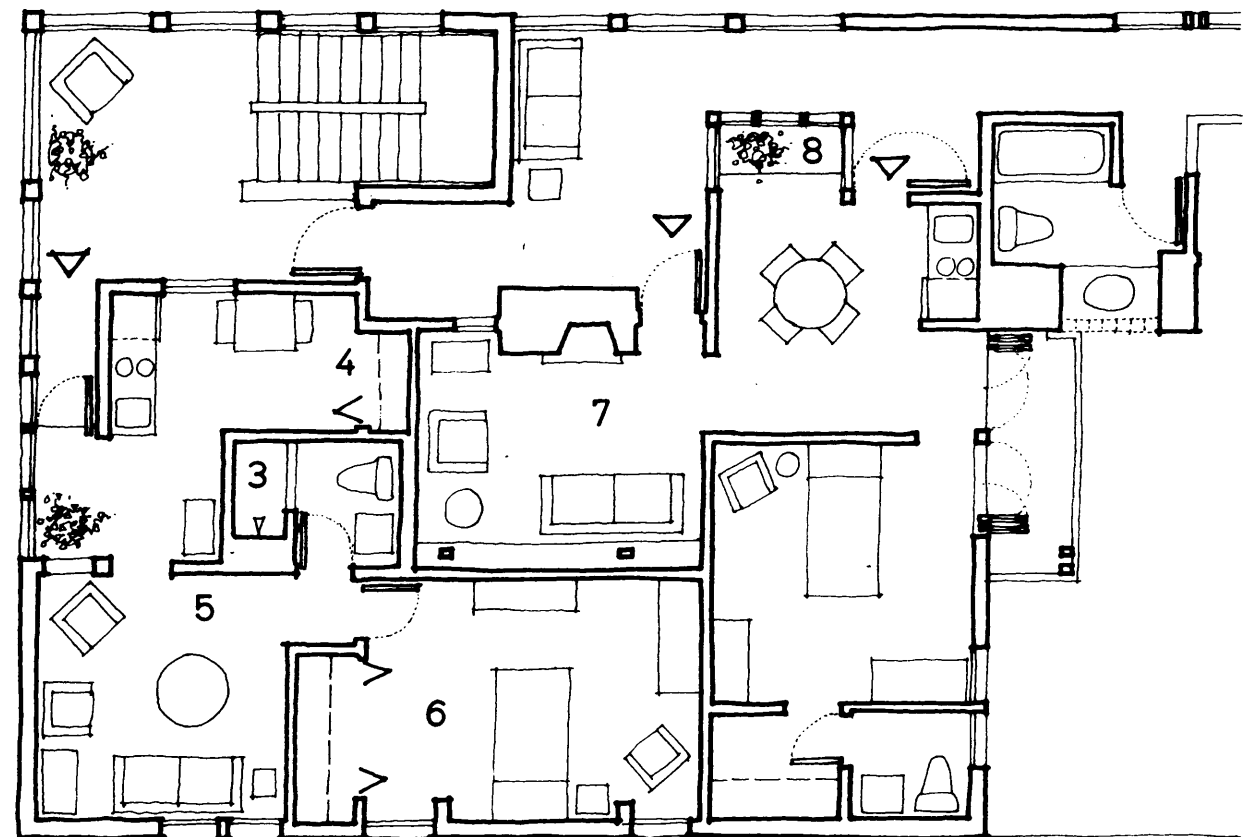
Scenario B: Over time tenancy changes; there is a greater need for independence and privacy so a shower is added to one unit and common accessways are eliminated (3).

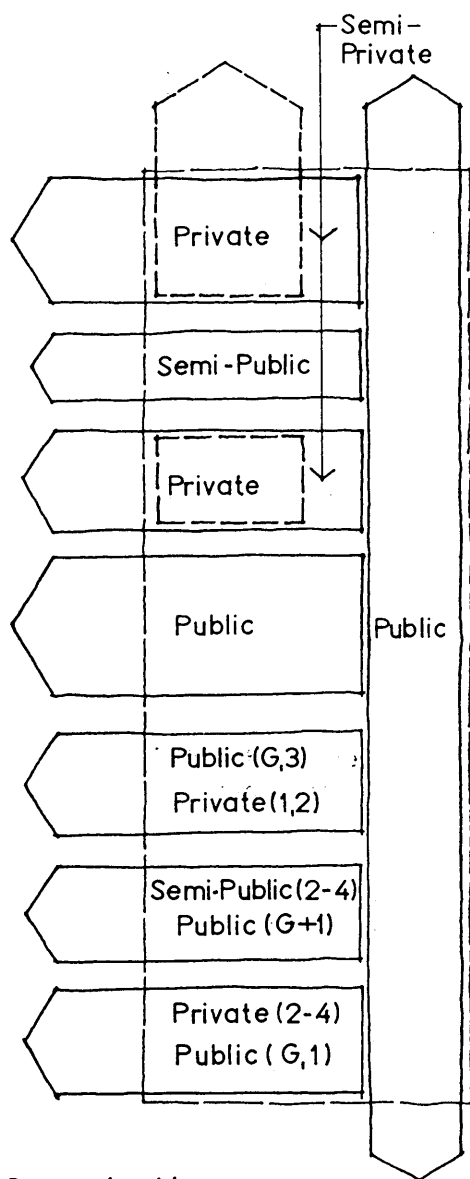


Scenario B: because these dwellers spend more time at home and have retained their own furniture, they have need of more leisure and storage space.

- 4 pantry
- 5 sitting room
- 6 bedrm. & large cl.
- 7 sitting room
- 8 sideboard alcove

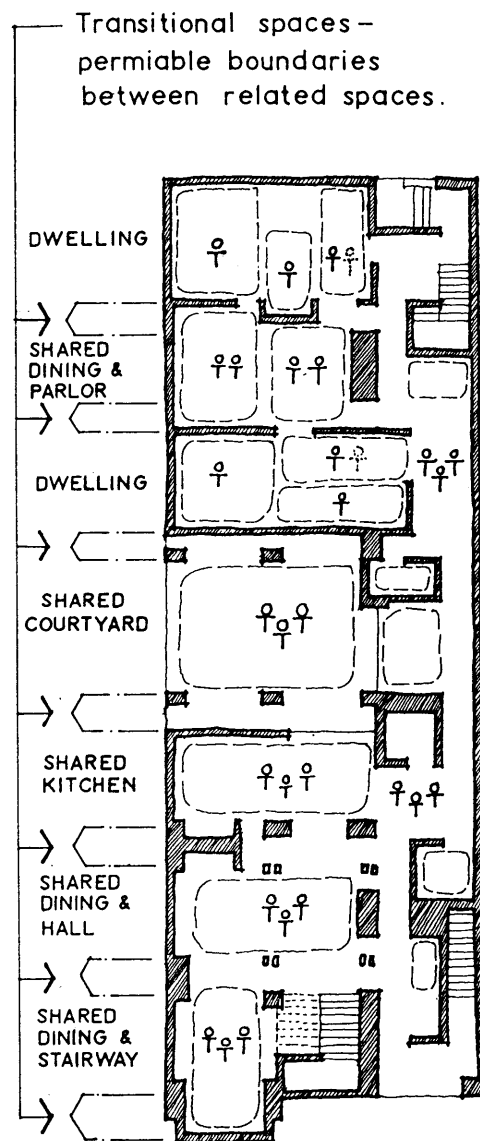
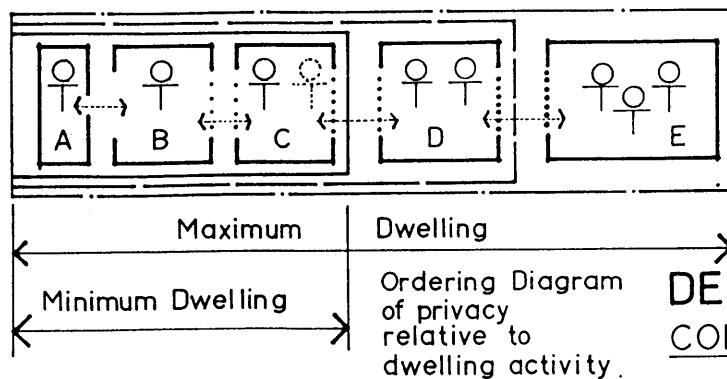
Partial Second Floor Plan
Initial Occupancy and an
Adaptive Variation





Plan Organization

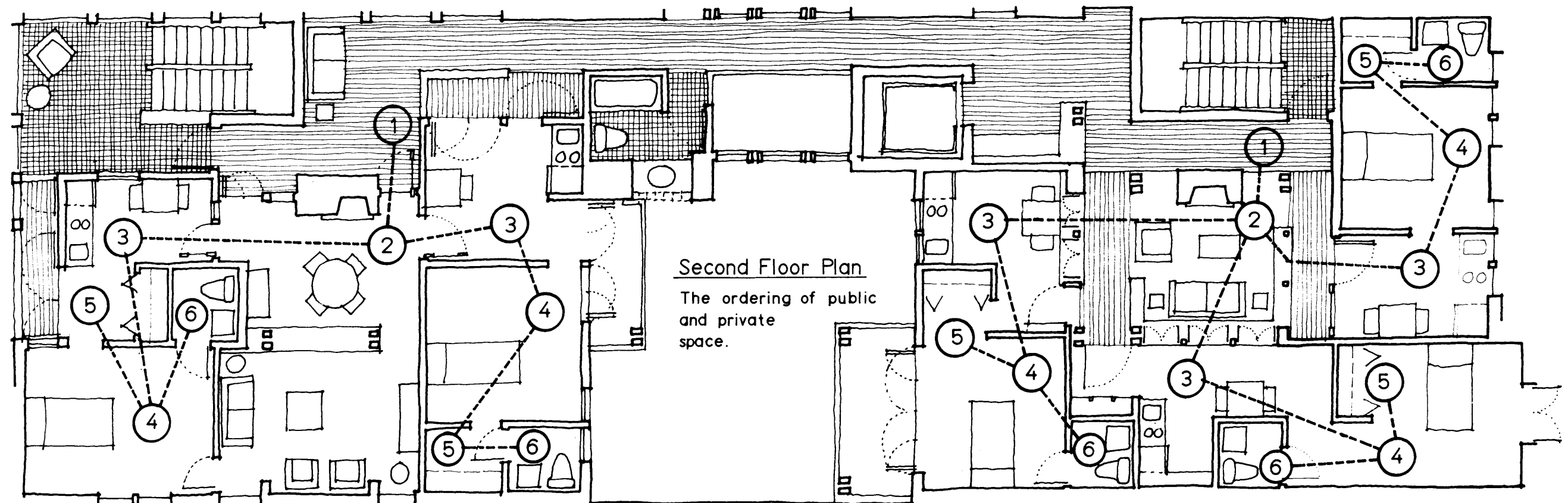
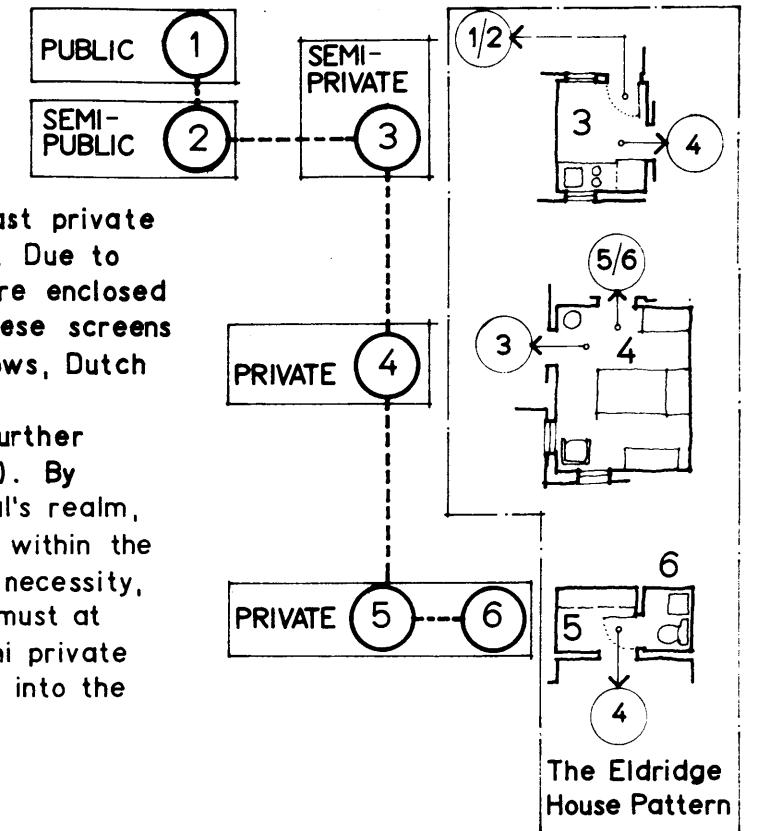
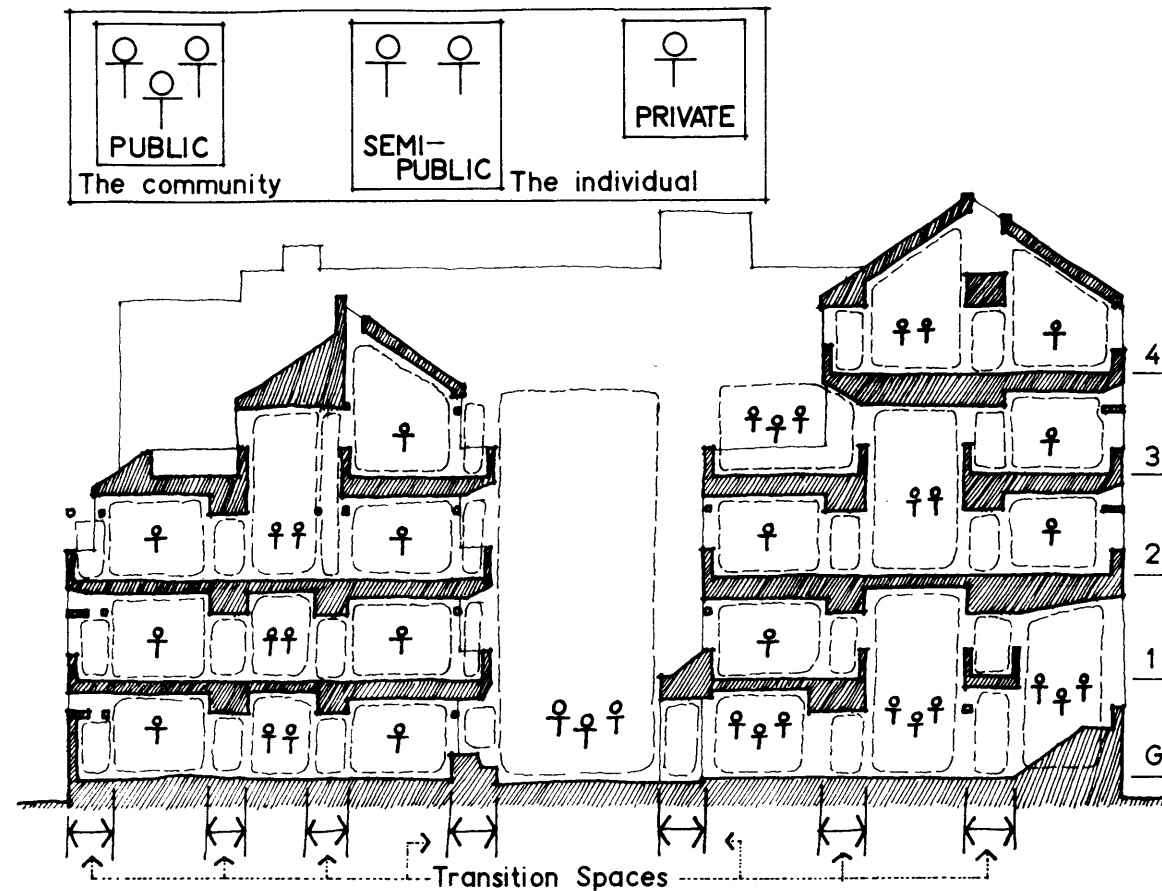
G = ground floor 1 = first floor
 2, 3, 4 = second, third, fourth floors

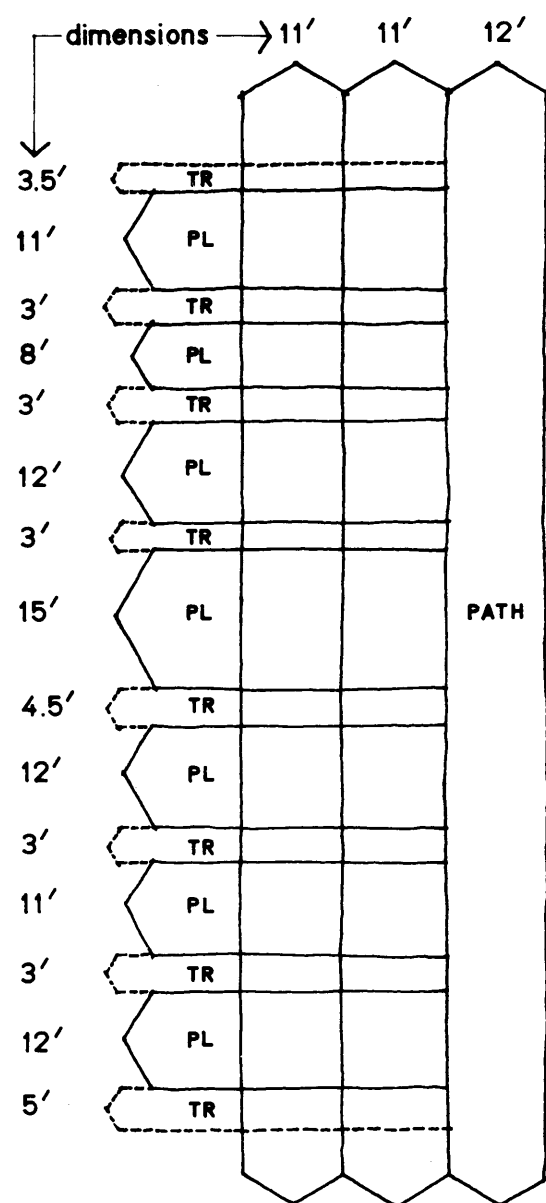


Ground Floor Plan

- A = Toilet room, dressing
- B = sleeping, leisure
- C = meal preparation & dining
- D = leisure, dining
- E = leisure, dining, meal preparation, bathing, & laundry

DESIGN DIAGRAMS
COMMUNITY & PRIVACY

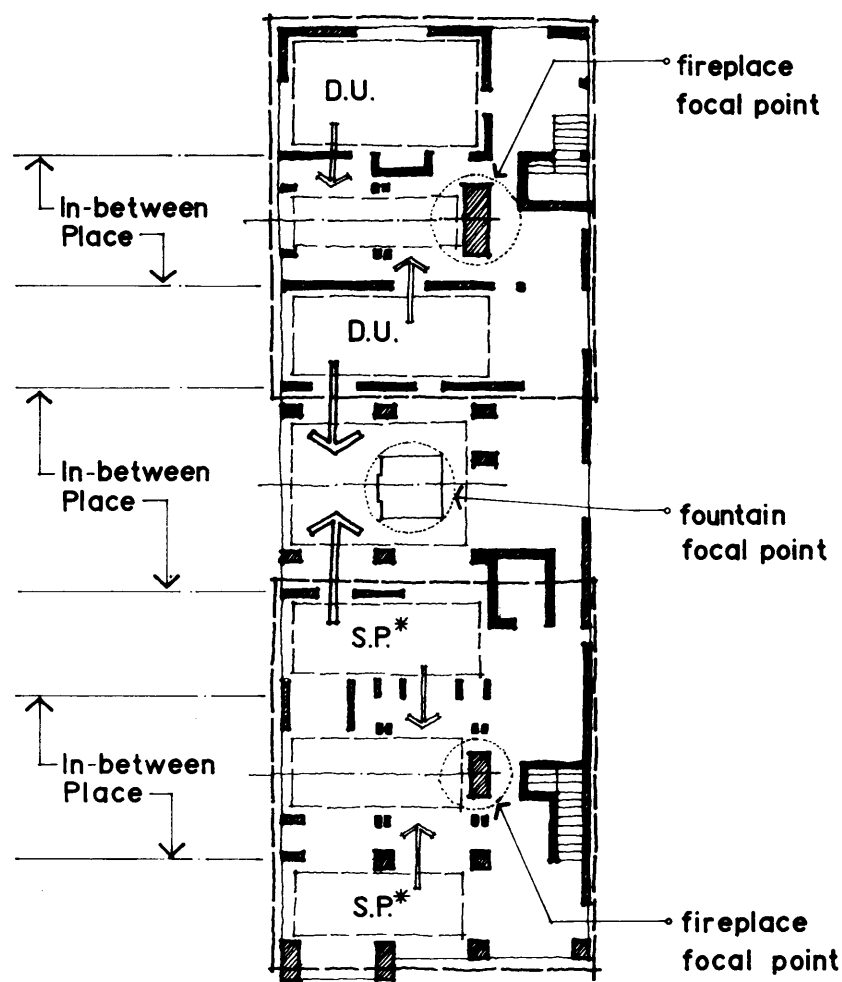




Plan Organization

PL = place

TR = transition space, part path and part place.



Ground Floor Plan

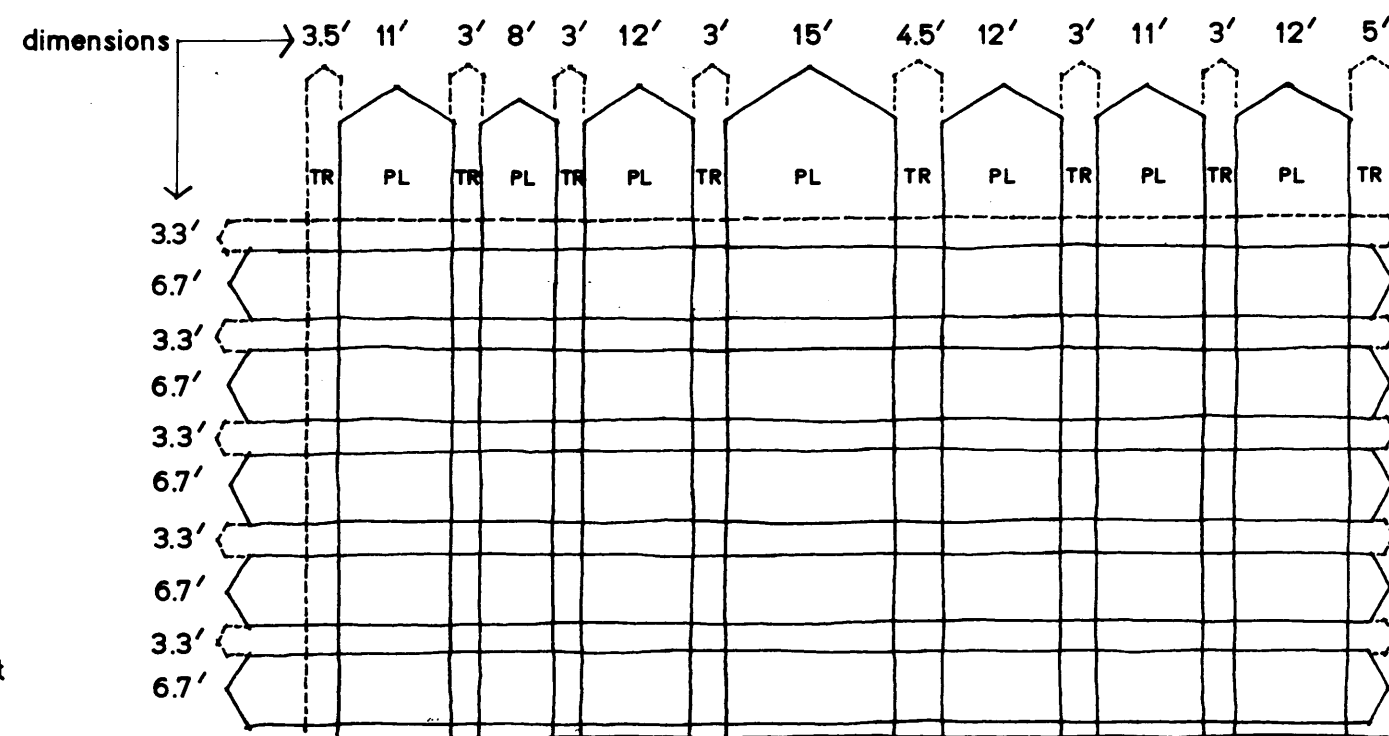
D.U. = dwelling unit

S.P.* = shared place below, dwelling unit above.

The design is ordered through the repetition of a spatial pattern which consists of specific-use spaces related to ambiguous-use spaces through screen-like transitional spaces. Repetition of dimensions reinforces the order.

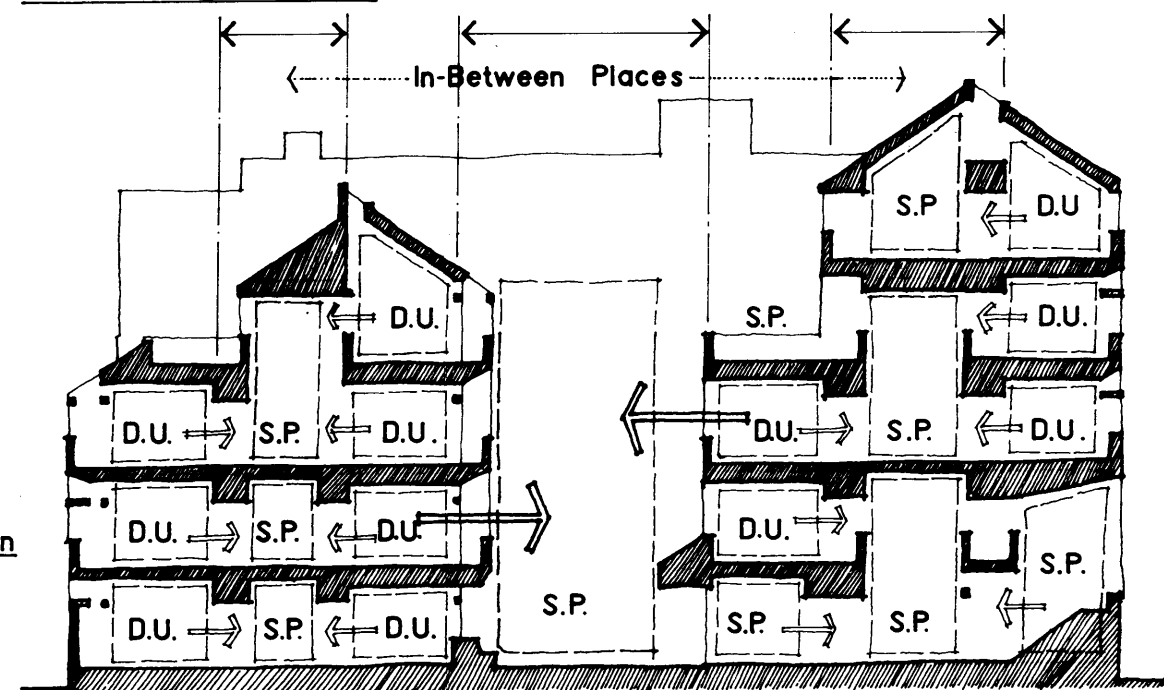
DESIGN DIAGRAMS

ORDER & DIVERSITY



PL = place

Section Organization TR = transition space

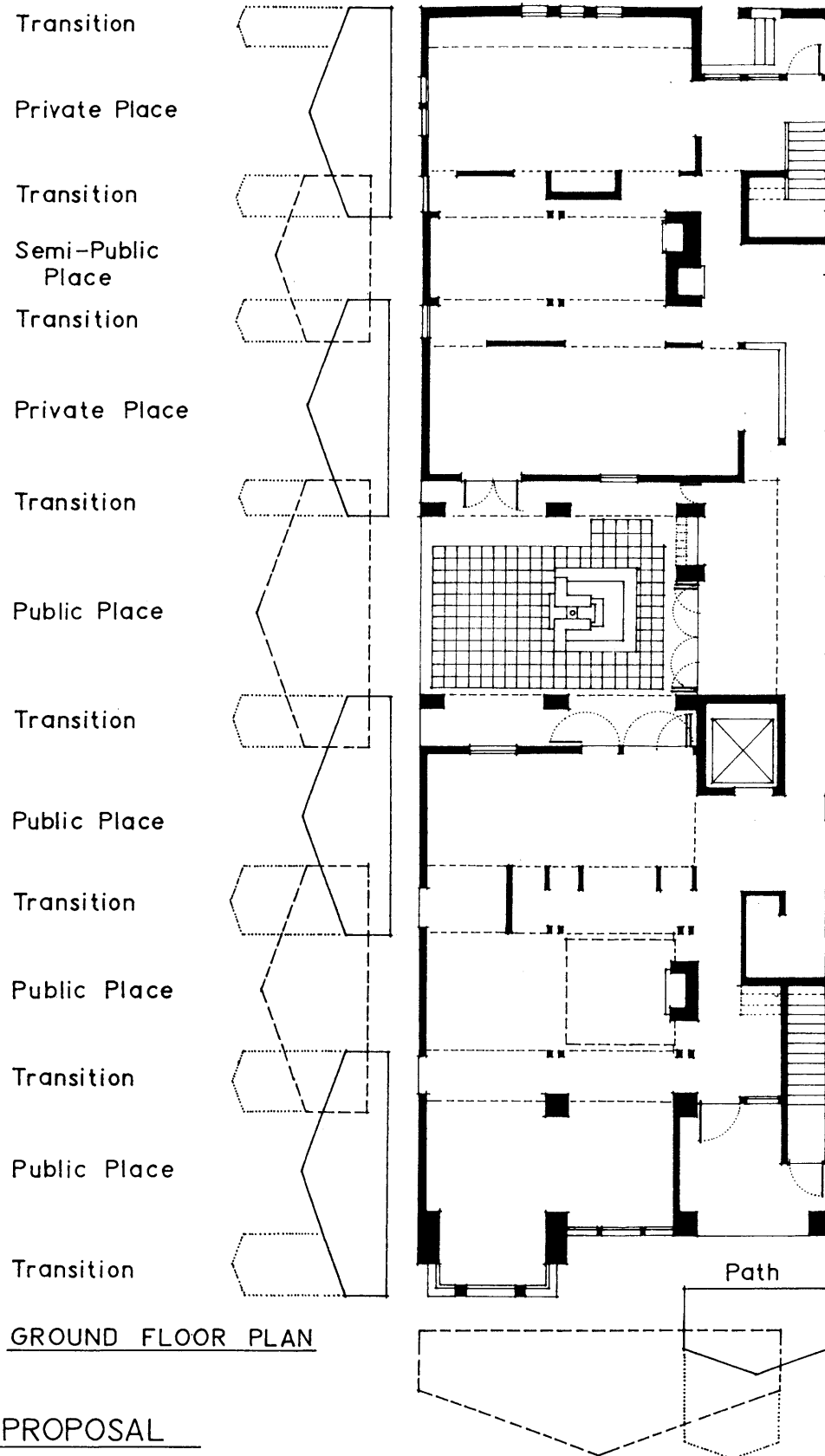


General Section

D.U. = dwelling unit

S.P. = shared place

The design is diversified by changing the density of the screen enclosure at the transition spaces and by varying vertical dimensions in order to create a related range of forms and scale.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

DESIGN PROPOSAL

THE STRUCTURE PRIOR TO INHABITATION

Place

Transition



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